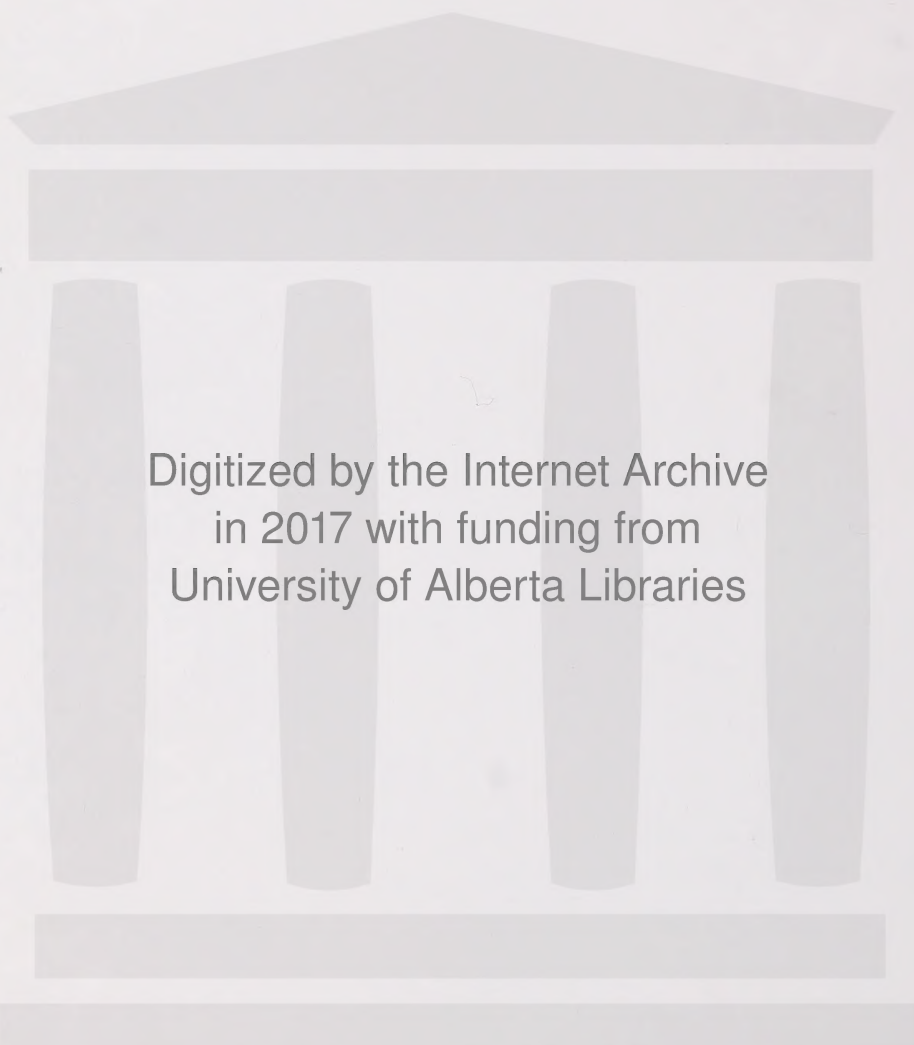




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English Language Arts 20-2

Making Choices

Module 3



English Language Arts 20-2
Module 3: Making Choices
Student Module Booklet
Learning Technologies Branch
ISBN 0-7741-2478-4

The Learning Technologies Branch acknowledges with appreciation the Alberta Distance Learning Centre and Pembina Hills Regional Division No. 7 for their review of this Student Module Booklet.

This document is intended for	
Students	✓
Teachers	✓
Administrators	
Home Instructors	
General Public	
Other	



You may find the following Internet sites useful:

- Alberta Learning, <http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca>
- Learning Technologies Branch, <http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca/lb>
- Learning Resources Centre, <http://www.lrc.learning.gov.ab.ca>

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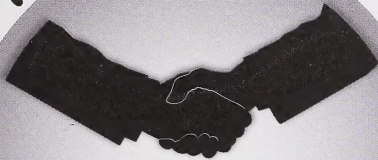
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Welcome

to English Language Arts 20–2

Module 1



Looking
Ahead

Module 2



Roles and
Relationships

Module 3



Making
Choices

Module 4



Media and Technology
Influences

Module 5



Understanding
and Acceptance

Module 6



Characters
in Conflict

Resources

The English Language Arts 20-2 learning package consists of six Student Module Booklets and twelve Assignment Booklets. In addition to the course materials, you will need the following resources, which are available from the Learning Resources Centre:

- the textbook *Between the Lines 11* (Nelson Thomson Learning, 2002)
- the textbook *Communicate!* (Nelson Thomson Learning, 2002)
- the novel *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck
- a dictionary, such as *Gage Canadian Dictionary* or *Canadian Oxford Dictionary*, and a thesaurus
- access to the feature film *October Sky* (1999)

Following is a list of equipment that you will be required to use. You may wish to discuss the availability of equipment with your teacher.

- You will need a computer with a CD-ROM to view the multimedia programs that come with the course. It is recommended that the computer have a word-processing program, such as *Microsoft® Word*, installed on it. It is also recommended that the computer be connected to the Internet.
- To listen to the *English Language Arts 20-2 Audio CDs* that come with the course materials, you may use a CD player or a computer with a CD-ROM.
- To view the feature film, you will need a television and a VCR or DVD player.
- You will need some way to record oral assignments. You may choose to use an audiocassette recorder or a computer equipped with recording capability.

Finally, you will need a notebook or binder with lined paper to answer questions from the Student Module Booklets and a scribbler or coiled notebook for journal writing.

Note: If you choose not to read *Of Mice and Men*, please contact your teacher regarding an alternate novel study.

Visual Cues

You will find many visual cues in this course. Colour is used to highlight terms that are defined in the Glossary. You will also find several icons in the margins. Read the following explanations to discover what the various icons prompt you to do.



Use one of the textbooks.



Use one of the course CDs.



View television or a feature film.



Explore the Internet.



Get together with a partner or a group.

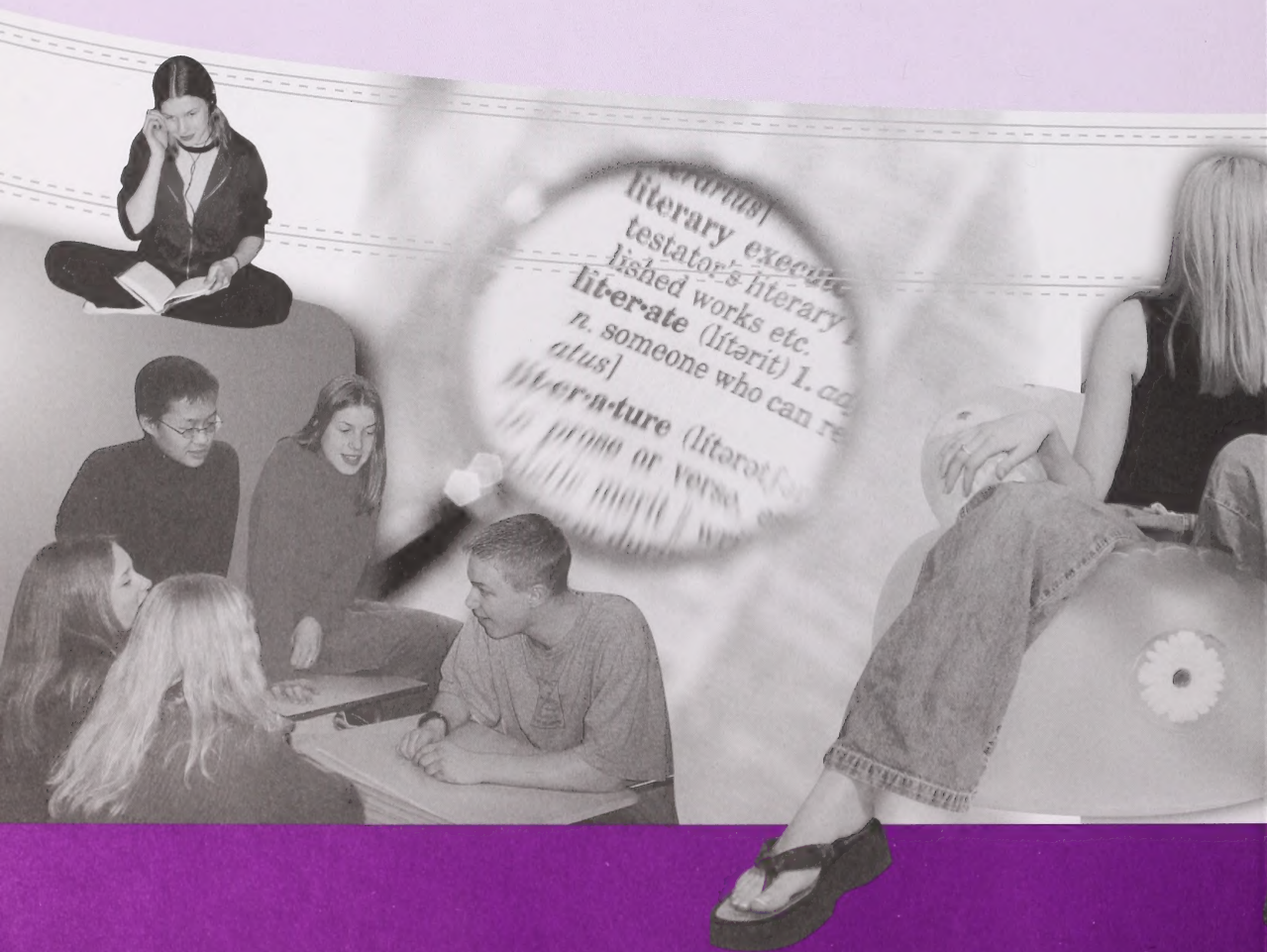
Assessment

There are two Assignment Booklets for each of the six modules of this course. Your work in these Assignment Booklets will be submitted to your teacher for assessment. If you have difficulty with any of the assignments, you should consult your teacher.

Your final mark in this course will be determined by

- the quality of your work in the Assignment Booklets
- how well you score on the final test
- your performance on any other tests or work that your teacher may assign
- any other criteria established by your teacher or your school

Your teacher or your school will provide information about how your marks will be distributed.



Strategies

Organize your materials and work area before you begin so that you have everything that you need. You should have a quiet area away from distractions in which to work. Use a calendar to set goals for yourself to complete each module. Create a schedule, and display it as a reminder.

Many of the learning outcomes that you need to be able to demonstrate in English Language Arts 20-2 involve your skills in working with others. In the lessons that you will do in each section, you will often encounter instructions asking you to work with a partner or in a group. Although it is possible to do much of this work on your own, you will likely get much more out of it if you collaborate with others. Your partner can be a friend, classmate, or family member. You do not need to work with the same partner all of the time. If you are having problems arranging for a study partner, contact your teacher.

To achieve success in this course, be sure to read all the directions carefully and work slowly and systematically through the material in the Student Module Booklets. Taking this approach will prepare you for your assignments. Try to set realistic goals for yourself each day and each week, so that you will complete each module in a reasonable time. Do your assignments regularly, and remember to review and proofread your work before sending it to your teacher. Careful work habits will greatly increase your chances for success in English Language Arts 20-2.



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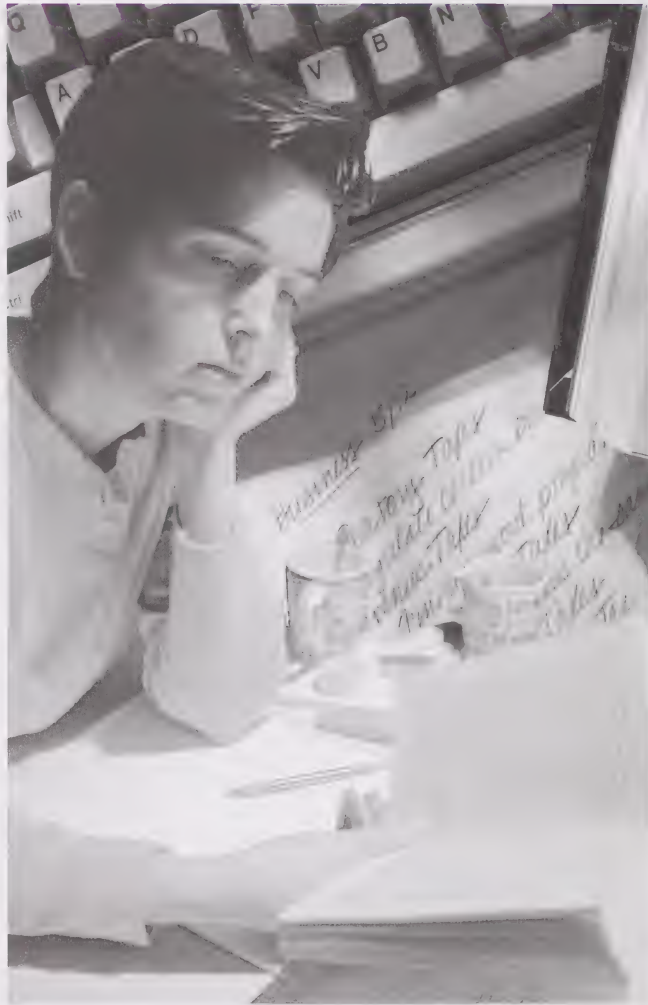
Module Overview

Do you enjoy the imaginary worlds created by writers of fiction? You will have that opportunity in this module. Escaping into a well-written story can be a relaxing and satisfying experience as you explore a new world and gain a better understanding of other lives. But a good story should do more than just let you escape for a while; it should also help you see your own world rather differently and, perhaps, ask some questions about human life and values.

You will begin this module by exploring short stories and reviewing story elements and literary devices. If you understand the structure of a story, you will be better able to understand the author's purpose in writing the story. You will then read the novel *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck. It deals with the problems of loneliness in society while focusing on the lives of two friends who try to keep alive a dream in an otherwise disheartening environment. The stories that you are about to read make you think about your own choices.

By the end of this module, you should understand the differences between a short story and a novel, be able to discuss the various elements of a story, be able to use them in your own story writing, and look at a story critically. In this module you will

- review the story elements
- discover some strategies for reading short stories and novels
- consider the use of literary devices
- connect stories to your own views and experiences
- respond critically and personally to fiction
- demonstrate your understanding of Steinbeck's purpose in writing his novel



Section 1

Understanding Short Stories

As long as people have told tales, there have been short stories. In fact, the short story is one of the oldest forms of **fiction**.

There are as many kinds of short stories as there are stories themselves. A short story may be written to provide the reader with escape, to teach the reader a lesson, to make the reader think, or to inspire the reader.

What is it about the short story that appeals to readers? Aside from their entertainment value, many people find short stories appealing because they are compact. A good short story does not just happen; its different parts are carefully arranged by the author in order to have the maximum emotional and intellectual impact on you, the reader.



In this section, you will read and respond to short stories, review the elements of the short story, and explore the use of some literary devices. You will also try your hand at writing your own short story. As you work through the lessons, you should increase your understanding of the short story in particular and good prose fiction in general.

Lesson 1: What Is a Short Story?



Mr. Murray: If you were asked to explain what a short story is, what would you say?

Noah: A short story is a piece of **prose** fiction that isn't very long.

Mr. Murray: Good. Anything else?

Mei-Ly: A short story usually focuses on one event and has just a few characters. Most of the time it covers a short time span.

Lee: You can read a short story in one sitting!

Naseem: I read somewhere that if the novel is a concert, the short story is a song.

Mr. Murray: There is some truth to that. Novelists might have many characters placed in different settings involved in complicated plots that cover a long time span. Writers of short stories don't have that option. Every word in a short story has to count.

A short story is a brief narrative written primarily to entertain you, the reader. Reading a short story can be compared to taking a trip to a new place where you meet new people. In telling their short stories, writers share their ideas about human nature and the world. By analyzing and interpreting these stories, you gain insights into people and their behaviour. You may also learn something about yourself.

Journal Entry 3A

Do you enjoy reading short stories? Why or why not? What is the best (or worst) short story you have ever read? What made that story so memorable?

Reading a Short Story

How you read and interpret any piece of literature, including short stories, is influenced by several factors. These include reading relationships, attitudes and preferences, and reading strategies.

Reading Relationships

The relationship between you—the reader—and the writer helps determine how you visualize the writer's message. Readers bring their own backgrounds, prior knowledge, feelings, and concerns to their reading, creating interesting differences in the interpretation of any story. You explored the reading relationship in Section 3 of Module 2. You may find it helpful to review that information now.

Attitudes and Preferences

Closely related to reading relationships are attitudes and preferences. All writers, whether they write short stories or novels, try to make connections with their readers. For example, in *Of Mice and Men*, you might not be able to relate to ranch life if you have never lived on a ranch, but you can certainly relate to the two friends' quest to fulfil their dream. Dreams and hopes are part of every reader's experience. For this reason, *Of Mice and Men* can be said to have universal appeal.



Noah: Does every story have to have universal appeal?

Mr. Murray: No, but a good story should have the potential to connect with anyone. A person in Africa or Australia should be able to enjoy a John Steinbeck story as much as any North American.

Naseem: What if it doesn't connect?

The fault may lie with the story if it is not well written. Perhaps the author has written about something that lacks universal appeal. Perhaps the characters and situations are not realistic. Maybe the author has not provided enough details to make the story seem authentic.

More often than not, however, the reason a reader cannot connect with a piece of literature has to do with the reader's attitude toward the literature. Most readers have very definite preferences in their reading when it comes to content, length, **genre**, and style. Often people prefer to read stories that reflect their particular cultural, religious, and social values. Some readers are not prepared to meet a writer halfway.

1. Suppose you were told that the next reading you had to do in English Language Arts 20-2 would be your favourite type of fiction. Describe the sort of reading it would be. Do not describe a specific plot; instead, describe the type of story. Why do you like this type of fiction so much?
2. Now describe your least favourite type of story. Why do you dislike it so much?

Compare your responses with those on page 89 in the Appendix.



Eric: What's wrong with disliking certain types of stories?

Mr. Murray: Nothing. The trouble is, many readers tend to like one type of story—say, murder mysteries or romances. And even when they do set out to read something else, they decide they're not going to like it before they even start reading. For example, suppose I told you that your next reading is a science fiction short story. What would be your response?

Eric: Pretty good. I like science fiction and I like short stories.

Mr. Murray: Fine. But you might hear some different comments from other students. Such comments are nothing more than first impressions and, as you know, you should never turn first impressions into final judgments.

Naseem: So you have to meet the writer halfway with an open mind.

Mr. Murray: That's right. Remember what you learned about reading relationships in Module 2? What you bring to your reading—your reading relationship—helps to determine how you visualize the writer's message. You will enhance that relationship if you approach your reading with an open mind.

Reading Strategies

3. List some strategies that you use when you read a short story.

Compare your response with the one on page 89 in the Appendix.

To learn more about reading strategies that you can use to understand and appreciate short stories better, read pages 3 to 6 of *Communicate!* It is quite likely that you already use some of these strategies. If not, you can try them for the short story you are about to read.

4. Turn to page 116 of *Between the Lines 11* to the short story “Paid-up Member.” Consider the title of the story, the “Before You Read” note, and the background notes about the author. Use this information to make predictions about the story.
5.
 - a. Read the first three paragraphs of “Paid-up Member.” Do the predictions you made in question 4 appear to be reasonable?
 - b. What have you learned so far about the story?

Compare your responses with those on page 90 in the Appendix.



Now sit back and read the rest of the story “Paid-up Member.” Be sure to add any new words you encounter to your vocabulary log.

Surprise Endings

Did the ending of the story surprise you? Or did you see it coming? Short story writers try to create specific effects when they end their stories. Some endings are designed to shock or surprise the reader. Other endings make the reader think. Still others leave the reader with unanswered questions.

A surprise ending offers an unexpected twist to the story. If you, the reader, are not convinced that a legitimate purpose has been served by the ending, you will feel cheated and manipulated. Readers do not like endings that do not make sense. Surprise endings can serve a number of purposes. They can emphasize the main idea of the story. They can also reveal or emphasize character. These surprise endings may leave readers thinking about the story long after they have finished reading it.

6. What purpose do you think the surprise ending serves in “Paid-up Member”?
7. a. Most stories with surprise endings contain **foreshadowing**—a hint of events to come later. How is the ending of “Paid-up Member” foreshadowed?
- b. How does the use of foreshadowing make the ending more believable?

Compare your responses with those on page 90 in the Appendix.



If you enjoy reading stories with surprise endings, read “The Interlopers” on page 41 in your textbook. The author Saki, whose real name was H.H. Munro, was famous for his macabre, humorous tales, which often have ironic endings.

Literary Devices

Writers use a wide range of techniques and devices to create the effects they desire. The surprise ending and foreshadowing are just two examples. Another literary device that is often used by short story writers is **allusion**. An allusion is a reference to something or someone famous from literature, history, or culture. An allusion can be used to support an idea already introduced, or it may be used for contrast or as an ironic comment. For instance, a person could be referred to as an Ebenezer Scrooge. If that person were cold, bitter, and ungenerous, then the allusion would simply support the image of that character. If, however, that person were generous, open-hearted, and warm, then the allusion would be ironic. It is up to the reader to determine how an author intends the allusion to be taken.

When making an allusion, the author assumes the reader or listener is familiar with the reference. In “Paid-up Member,” an allusion is made to the poem “In Flanders Fields.” Many Canadian students are familiar with this poem because of its association with Remembrance Day. This poem can be found on page 107 in the Appendix. In addition, you can listen to a reading of the poem on your *English Language Arts 20-2 Audio CD*.



8. Do question 3 on page 119 in *Between the Lines 11*.



Compare your response with the one on page 90 in the Appendix.

Go to page 1 of Assignment Booklet 3A and respond to questions 1 and 2 of Section 1.

Portfolio Item 3A

Do either question 5 or 6 on page 119 of *Between the Lines 11*.

In this lesson, you answered the question “What is a short story?” You looked at how your reading relationship, attitudes, and preferences influence your understanding of a story. You applied some reading strategies to a short story. You examined the use of literary devices. In the next lesson, you will review some story elements.



Lesson 2: The Elements of a Story



By now you should recognize that the writer very carefully crafts a short story. You are quickly drawn into the lives of the characters and soon discover their relationships and problems. Events and details are selected to contribute to the overall impression. Just as every piece in a jigsaw puzzle contributes to the finished picture, so do the elements writers use when creating a short story. These elements include the following:

- **setting** and **mood**
- **plot** and **conflict**
- **characters**
- **point of view**
- **theme**

Setting and Mood

Setting is the time and place of a story. Every story has a setting. Authors usually establish the setting near the beginning of a short story or novel so that readers have some idea where and when the story takes place. Authors convey setting by using specific details. They probably will not tell you, “This story takes place on a quiet street,” but they will convey this fact through their choice of words.

Read the following paragraph and then examine the chart that comes after.

The noon bell on the clock tower began to peal as I walked along the hot, quiet street in the town where my aunt lived. Summer holidays had arrived. I was looking forward to spending an entire Saturday in the town pool when suddenly I heard someone call, “Help! Please help me!”

Time	<i>noon, Saturday, summer holidays</i>
Place	<i>quiet street in town where aunt lives</i>

- a. What is the time setting at the beginning of the story “Paid-up Member”?
- b. What is the place setting for “Paid-up Member”?

Compare your response with the one on page 91 in the Appendix.

The creation of mood is just as important as the establishment of setting. Mood is the feeling that a writer creates with words in the reader’s mind. Think of music—a heavy drumbeat can energize the listener while a violin creates a peaceful and relaxed mood. So, too, can a writer’s choice of words create excitement or calm.

Portfolio Item 3B



You are the Mood Doctor—the hottest DJ on the radio. Your job is to put together segments of music and sound that will create certain moods in the minds of your listeners. What sort of mood would you like to create in your listeners today? What setting should they be in to best appreciate what they hear? Describe the mood and setting you aim to create, and then select the right mix of music and sounds. You can even use your own voice. You can take this portfolio item one step further by actually recording the program that you have put together.



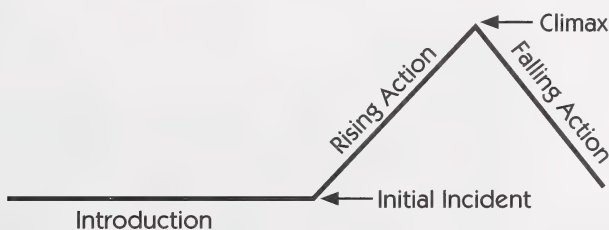
2. Think about, or in a group discuss, the following question. Suppose you were writing each of the following types of stories. Describe a particular mood that each type of story might try to create.
- a. adventure b. romance c. horror
3. a. Describe the mood at the beginning of the short story “Paid-up Member.”
b. List words and phrases that the author uses to help create this mood.

Compare your responses with those on page 91 in the Appendix.

Plot and Conflict

Plot

Plot is simply the “what happens” part of a story. A diagram for a plot would generally consist of the following parts:



The introduction provides the **antecedent action**, setting, characters, and mood. The antecedent action includes any event that has taken place before the story begins.

DID YOU KNOW?

The prefix *ante* means *before* or *in front of*. For example, your grandparents and parents are your antecedents. An anteroom is a small room leading to a larger one, such as a waiting room. In grammar, an antecedent is the noun that a pronoun replaces. Read “Pronoun Antecedents” on page 94 in *Communicate!* to learn the importance of using precise pronouns.

You may be more familiar with the prefix *anti*, which means *against* or *the opposite of*. For example, glycol is used as antifreeze to prevent the water in car radiators from freezing. An antihero is a person in a story or play who, despite being the central character, has none of the qualities normally expected of a hero.



4. List three examples of antecedent action in the story “Paid-up Member.”

The action in a story usually begins after the introduction and the first happening, that is, the incident or situation that gets the story going. This is called the **initial incident**. It is the motivation for the conflict. In “Paid-up Member,” it is not so much a single incident that sets off the story as the ideas that grow in the mind of the main character.

5. a. What is Simon’s motivation for murdering Dickie?
b. What is Simon’s ultimate goal?

Compare your responses with those on page 91 in the Appendix.



The **rising action** is all the action that occurs between the initial incident and the climax. It is said *to rise* because there is an increase in feelings of suspense, excitement, and anticipation on the part of the reader. Suspense is what makes you wonder what will happen next. It keeps you reading.

6. List five examples of rising action in the story “Paid-up Member.”

Compare your examples with those on page 91 in the Appendix.

The **climax** is the highest point of interest or excitement in the story. It occurs at the point where there is a solution to the problem that was set in motion by the initial incident. The situation is resolved one way or another at the point of climax.



Mrs. Jensen: What do you think is the point of climax in “Paid-up Member”?

Zoe: Well, at first I thought it was when the handcuffs were snapped on Simon’s wrists. But when I thought about it some more, I realized it was right at the end when Wheeler says “Poppies.” That’s when the situation is resolved.

Lee: I agree with Zoe. I think everything built up to that moment. You just know that Simon is going to be caught but you don’t know how or why until Wheeler reveals that the envelope contained poppy seeds.

Conflict

Writers construct their stories so that there is usually some tension between two opposing sides. This tension, which fuels the rising action, is the conflict. Conflict is the basis of every story.

The conflict in a story may be external or internal and may involve individuals or groups. Readers can expect to find three types of conflict in literature:

- person against person (external)
- person against self (internal)
- person against environment (external)

In a person-against-person conflict, one or more of the other characters threaten to harm the main character or try to prevent the main character from reaching his or her goal.

In a person-against-self conflict, the main character may be struggling with a difficult moral problem and have to decide what is the right course of action. The conflict tests the character’s values, principles, attitudes, and beliefs. The main character may also be struggling to overcome fear or self-doubt.

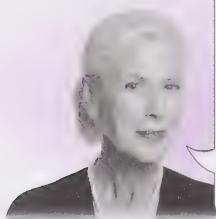


In a person-against-environment conflict, the main character is struggling against elements in his or her surroundings. The conflict can be with a force of nature such as the weather, difficult terrain, or animals. It can be with some other factor or barrier in the character's environment including such things as locked doors, rules and laws, or the values of society.

7. Who or what is in conflict in "Paid-up Member"?

Compare your response with the one on page 92 in the Appendix.

Characters



Believable and interesting characters are at the core of every successful story. You can tell what a character is like by his or her words, thoughts, and actions. You can also tell what the character is like by what the author says and by what other characters say about the character.

8. a. Describe the main characters in "Paid-up Member." Indicate how each character's traits are revealed.
- b. It is obvious that Simon and Dickie are very different. How do these differences contribute to the conflict?

Compare your responses with those on page 92 in the Appendix.

In every story, there is a **protagonist** and an **antagonist**. The protagonist is the central character in a story. The protagonist has a goal that he or she is trying to reach. The antagonist is the person, force, or circumstance that is trying to keep the protagonist from reaching his or her goal. The antagonist could be another person, a dangerous animal, an act of nature, or even the protagonist's conscience.

9. Who is the protagonist and who or what is the antagonist in each of the following situations?
- a. Lena and Sue leave their acreage and drive off to school. They come to the river. A recent flood has washed the bridge away.
- b. Pankaj doesn't sign up for basketball tryouts because he does not want to risk the humiliation of being cut.
- c. Jacob arrives at a new school. One of the other students taunts him, telling him to go back where he came from. Other students join the taunting.

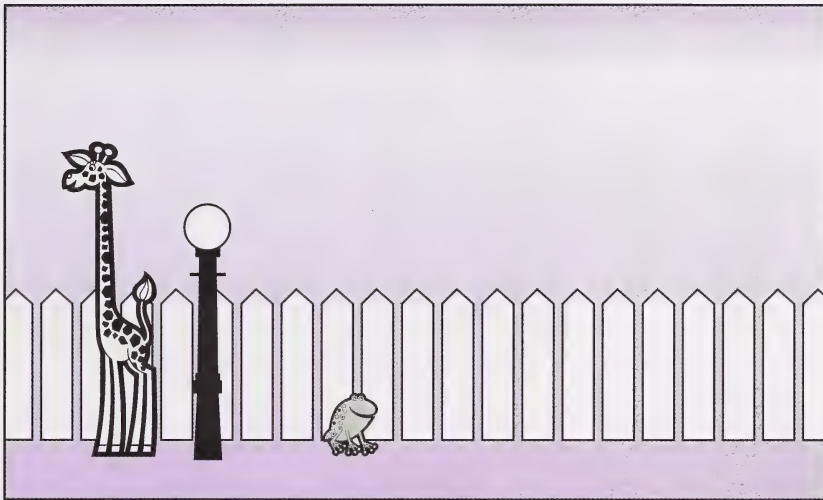
10. Who is the protagonist and who is the antagonist in “Paid-up Member”?

Compare your responses with those on page 92 in the Appendix.

Point of View

The way that a person views a scene or event depends on three factors:

- the scene or event itself
- the person’s location in relation to the scene
- what the person reads into the scene he or she is viewing



Geraldine and Kermit arrive punctually at the arranged meeting place for their blind date. For some reason, they both believe they have been stood up.

The nature of the scene itself is a determining factor in how it is viewed. The scene or event might be predominantly beautiful, ugly, **squalid**, or serene.

squalid: filthy or degraded because of poverty and neglect

11. What dominant impression does each of the following convey? The first one has been done as an example.
- a garbage dump: *filth, stench, disorder*
 - a wheatfield in the middle of a summer drought
 - the Northern Lights
 - a sunset in Hawaii

Compare your responses with those on page 92 in the Appendix.

The point of view is the angle the author uses to tell the story. It tells the reader where the author is when he or she tells the story. Just as photographers must pick the best place to set up their cameras, writers must choose the most suitable spots from which to view the scenes or events they write about.

What writers are able to see in their stories depends on their point of view. For example, a scene viewed from a distance looks quite different from the same scene viewed up close, as you can see in the following pictures:



Note that distance is not only physical. It can also be emotional. Is the writer telling the story from the “inside” or the “outside”?

Generally, authors will tell a story from one of three points of view: first person, omniscient, or limited omniscient.

- **First Person:** Here the author uses one of the characters to tell the story, using *I* or *me*. The reader knows only those things that the character knows and is willing to tell about himself or herself. This point of view is often seen as being more true-to-life, because it gives the reader a chance to walk in the character’s shoes and see everything through the character’s eyes.
- **Omniscient:** In this point of view, the writer tells the story in the third person, using *he*, *she*, *they*, or the name of the person being described. The narrator is all-knowing, all-seeing; the omniscient narrator can tell the reader everything the characters say, do, and think in the course of the story, but the omniscient narrator does not participate in the story.
- **Limited Omniscient:** This point of view is the same as omniscient with one important exception: the narrator is limited to only one character’s mind and knows only those things that the one character knows. The limited omniscient point of view is used in the story “Paid-up Member.”

12. In the following examples, the same event is viewed from three different points of view. For each example, state which point of view is being used.
- As Jamila ran past the crowd for the final lap, Max thought that he had never seen his friend look so determined, so sure of success. Nothing, no one, was going to take the prize from Jamila this time.
 - I would keep going, no matter what. My ankle would just have to hold. One lap to go; nothing could stop me now!
 - She passed the grandstand, her pace as strong as ever, with not one sign of letting up. The crowd, feeling her determination, cheered her wildly on her way.

Compare your responses with those on page 92 in the Appendix.

Finally, the way in which a person views a scene can also be affected by a person's interpretation of events. Look at the following picture.



In this example, one person sees violence; the other sees harmless fun. People bring their own backgrounds to everything that they see or hear. Suppose, for example, that you never learned to swim. The mere sight of a swimming pool might fill you with dread, while your friend who grew up swimming would see it and look forward to hours of fun and relaxation. Have you ever watched a movie and enjoyed it, while your friend just hated it? The point is, that even when people have the same physical point of view, their attitudes toward the scene will not be exactly the same, simply because no two people are exactly the same.

Journal Entry 3B

Most nursery rhymes are told from the point of view of an omniscient narrator. Choose a nursery rhyme and retell the events from the first-person point of view of one of the characters. How will the story be changed by the new narrator's different reading of events?

Theme

The theme is the central idea of a story. It is what the writer has to say about life and human nature. The theme is something important the story tries to tell the readers—something that might help the readers in their own lives. The theme is usually implied rather than directly stated so that readers must extract the theme from the combination of characters, conflict, and setting that make up the story. Keep in mind that different readers may interpret the same story in different ways.



Mei-Ly: Do all stories have a theme?

Mrs. Jensen: No, they don't; however, stories are usually more interesting if they do have a theme.

Eric: I have a hard time figuring out the theme of a story.

Mrs. Jensen: Sometimes it is tricky identifying the theme. It may be helpful to ask yourself, "What does the protagonist discover about life or about people by the end of the story?" Another hint is to consider the title of a story. It will often lead you to an understanding of the theme.

Eric: I have problems telling the difference between a theme and a subject or topic.

Mrs. Jensen: You're not alone. Perhaps the following definitions will help you to distinguish the differences.

A **subject** refers to the main idea about which the author is writing. For example, the following are subjects people could write about:

- love
- time
- technology
- hockey
- horses

A **topic** helps you to limit and state what you are going to write about. The following are topics for the subjects listed above:

- love: the love between two people
- time: the effects of aging
- technology: society's dependence on machines
- hockey: problems in the National Hockey League
- horses: the challenge of raising Arabians

Theme is the point the writer wishes to make about the topic. It is the main or central idea underlying a piece of writing. Theme is more specific than subject or topic. For example, look at the previously mentioned topic on the subject of "love."

Following are some possible themes, or points, that a writer might wish to make about love:

- Loves makes one vulnerable.
- Love involves taking risks.
- Love can be filled with pain; it is a waste of time better spent on something else.
- Love is the most powerful force for good in the world.



Try writing a theme statement for one of the other topics mentioned. A theme statement should be expressed as a complete sentence.

How to Find the Theme

To get at the theme, you must consider what the main purpose of the story or novel is and what it says about life. Be careful to distinguish between the plot and the theme. The plot deals with the events that happen in the story. The theme deals with the truths about life that are conveyed by the events of the story—in other words, what the writer has to say about the topic. Here are some tips to help you understand theme:

- Theme is not a summary of the main events of a story.
- Theme does not teach a lesson as a moral does; however, it can be a message about life that the writer wants to present.

- Theme is generally a statement about human behaviour. It pertains specifically to the story in which it is found, but it also applies to similar situations in life.
- Theme is always supported by the story. No details in the story will contradict any part of the theme.
- A theme may be stated in more than one way according to each person's own reactions to the work of literature.
- A theme should not be expressed as an adage or proverb, such as "Pride goes before a fall" or "A stitch in time saves nine."

Not every story has a strong theme. It may be difficult to find something significant about life in stories written primarily for entertainment.



When you are asked to state the theme of a selection, begin by deciding on the human behaviour that is being illustrated in the story. Clues to theme might be found in the main conflict, the outcome, or the title of the story.

13. What do you think is the theme of "Paid-up member"?

Compare your response with the one on page 92 in the Appendix.

Go to page 4 of Assignment Booklet 3A and respond to questions 3 and 4 of Section 1.



In this lesson, you have reviewed the elements of a story. This should increase your understanding of the stories you read. In the next lesson, you will look at the difference between personal and critical response.

Lesson 3: Responding to Stories

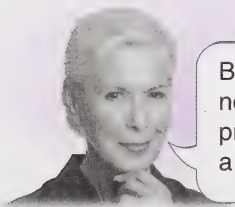
Much of the writing that you do in English language arts requires you to respond to something you have read. After reading a particular story, for example, you may be asked to reflect on your experience of reading that story—a **personal response**. Or, you may be asked to respond to the meaning of the story and the way it has been created—a **critical response**. In this lesson, you will be given some suggestions to help you gain confidence and skill in writing both kinds of response.



Personal Response

In some ways, responding to a new story is similar to responding to any other new experience. How do you react when you taste a new type of food? First, you probably decide whether you like or dislike the food. Then you might compare it to something familiar. When you respond to a story, you likely do the same thing. You express your opinion on whether you like or dislike the story; then you might compare it to another story that you have read or seen or to a personal experience that you have had or observed. This reaction is called a personal response.

When you respond personally to a story, you focus on your feelings about the story and the personal connection that you have made with it. Your personal response is rooted in your experiences, beliefs, values, and knowledge.



Because it is a personal reaction, there are no set rules, but the following ideas should provide you with some guidance for writing a personal response.

Writing a Personal Response

When asked to write a personal response to a particular story, consider the following questions:

- Do you like or dislike the story? Explain your opinion.
- Are there particular words, phrases, or images that you especially like?
- Does this story remind you of any other text, for example, a poem, story, picture, or film? Explain the similarity or difference.
- Does this story remind you of an experience you have had or observed?
- Does this story make you think about something or teach you something?

Remember, a personal response to a text is your reaction based on your feelings, experiences, beliefs, and values. Whenever you are confronted with something new, whether it is a text, a food, or some other experience, your first reaction is usually a personal one. However, it is also important to try to understand the new experience—whether you like it or not. In the following, you will learn how to respond to stories critically.



Critical Response

Another way of responding to a story is called critical response. When you engage in critical response, you focus on the story itself rather than on your personal reaction. You think about how the story has been created. For example, you notice word choices, imagery, and other devices that the author has used, such as contrast, irony, and symbolism. You think about what the author is saying and why he or she is saying it. You consider the main ideas and the details. You look at significant passages in the story, and you think about why these words are important.



Mei-Ly: People don't always have the same opinion about the meaning of a story. Is everyone's opinion right?

Mr. Murray: Your personal response to a story is your own. A personal response can't be right or wrong, although some personal responses are more thoughtful than others. But when you're talking about what a story—or a poem—means, not every interpretation is correct.

Noah: Does that mean only one interpretation is correct?

Mr. Murray: No, sometimes there can be several good interpretations. The important thing is to look carefully at the story and support your interpretation with words from the story. If something in the story contradicts your interpretation, you should take a second look and revise your interpretation.

Writing a Critical Response

Here are some tips to help you respond to a text critically:

- ***Read, view, or listen to the text carefully.*** The answers to questions about meaning usually lie in the text itself. Reread or listen again to passages that you do not understand, and look carefully at the words chosen by the author. Use a dictionary to find the meaning of unfamiliar words.
- ***Be open-minded about responses that differ from yours.*** Use the words from the text to verify your interpretation. If you find words or details that contradict your interpretation, you may need to change your view.
- ***Reread for greater understanding.*** You will notice details that you missed on your first reading. Those details may change your understanding of the text.
- ***Research the context of a text.*** Information about the author's life, the time that the story was written, or the historical events and places referred to may help you to understand the text.
- ***Identify the type of text so that you can select strategies to make meaning.*** You use different strategies when you read a story than when you read a poem or an article in a magazine.

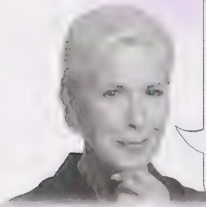
1. To help you understand the difference between personal and critical response, copy the following chart into your notebook. To complete your chart, answer the questions that follow. Allow plenty of space in your chart for your answers.

	Explanation	Sentence Beginning
Personal Response		<i>I enjoyed . . .</i>
Critical Response		<i>The ending showed . . .</i>

- Explain each type of response. Fill in the corresponding space in the chart.
- For each type of response, suggest three possible ways that you could begin a sentence in a journal entry. Examples have been given to help you.

Compare your responses with those on page 93 in the Appendix.

Can the suggestions we've just been given for responding to a story also be used when responding to other texts such as a poem or a photograph?



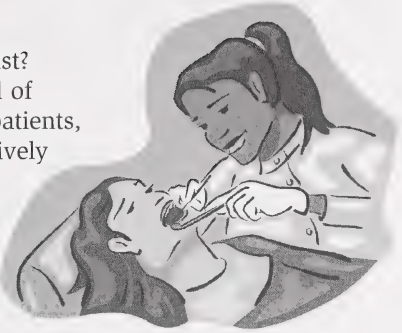
Yes, the same principles apply, whether you are responding to a poem, a photograph, a play, or a film. Of course, you need to recognize the devices and techniques used in a particular kind of text. For example, when you are reading poetry, you expect to see imagery and **figurative language**; when you are looking at a photograph, you look for lighting, camera angles, and distance.

Keep in mind that thoughtful responses depend on careful reading, viewing, or listening to the text. If you are distracted while listening, or interrupted when you are reading, you will likely lose concentration. Find a quiet place to do your reading and listening. Also, you may want to make a few short notes to record your initial observations, questions, and reactions. Jotting down these ideas may help you to understand and respond to the text. You will have the chance to practise responding personally and critically in the next part of this lesson.

“One of These Days”

What feelings do you have when you visit a dentist? Why do you think these feelings arise? What kind of feelings do you think dentists have toward their patients, particularly knowing that many people feel negatively about visiting a dentist?

The story you are about to read involves a visit to a dentist. Read the short story “One of These Days” on pages 13 to 15 in *Between the Lines 11*.



Journal Entry 3C

What is your opinion of the story “One of These Days”? Write a personal response to this story after considering the following questions:

- Do you like or dislike the story? Explain your opinion.
 - What feelings does this story evoke in you?
 - Are there particular words, phrases, or images that you especially like?
 - Does this story remind you of any other text, for example, a poem, story, picture, or film? What similarities and differences did you observe?
 - Does this story remind you of an experience you have had or observed?
 - Has this story prompted you to think about anything in a different way?
2. When did you realize “One of These Days” was not about an ordinary, everyday visit to a dentist?
 3. Do question 1 on page 16 in *Between the Lines 11*.
 4. Why do you think the mayor came to the dentist despite their political differences?
 5. Why do you think the mayor reacts as he does at the end of the story?

Compare your responses with those on page 94 in the Appendix.

Portfolio Item 3C

Use electronic or print resources to find out more about the author Gabriel Garcia Marquez and/or Colombia. Look for information that enhances your understanding of the story. Share your findings in a short report. For some timesaving strategies that are key to good researching, refer to chapter 7 in *Communicate!*



Writers often use the conflict that arises from a power struggle and the impact it has on a situation as the controlling idea of a story. Listen to the short story “Lather and Nothing Else,”¹ on your *English Language Arts 20-2 Audio CD*. As you listen, observe the similarities or differences between “Lather and Nothing Else” and “One of These Days.” You may want to make a few short notes to record your observations and reactions. You will be asked to respond critically to these stories in Assignment Booklet 3A.

6. a. Describe two ways the two stories are alike.
- b. Describe two ways the two stories differ.
7. The two stories have similar concepts. Which one did you like the best? Why?
8. Did your experience of listening to “Lather and Nothing Else” have more impact than your experience of reading “One of These Days”? Explain.

Compare your responses with those on page 94 in the Appendix.

Go to page 7 of Assignment Booklet 3A and respond to question 5 of Section 1.

In this lesson, you have examined writing personal and critical responses to a story. In the next lesson, you will explore another form of story—flash fiction.



¹ Hernando Tellez, “Lather and Nothing Else,” n.d. Reproduced with permission from *Americas*, a bimonthly magazine published by the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States in English and Spanish and with permission of Pearson Education Canada.

Lesson 4: Flash Fiction



I know what fiction is and I know that a flash is something that happens suddenly or briefly. But what is flash fiction?

You've come very close to answering your own question, Zoe! Perhaps it would be easier to understand if you read a piece of flash fiction.



"It Was a Year Ago"

1. You are about to read a short short story called "It Was a Year Ago." Before you read the selection, think about, or discuss with a partner, what you think it will be about.

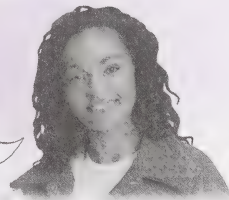
Compare your response with the one on page 95 in the Appendix.

Now find out if your predictions were accurate. Turn to page 114 of *Between the Lines 11* and read "It Was a Year Ago." Be sure you add any new words you encounter to your vocabulary log.



Wow! That really is a short short story!

Yeah! I think I'm beginning to see the connection to flash fiction.



On the surface, "It Was a Year Ago" seems to be a simple short text. It is, however, more complex than it first appears. Reread the selection and then answer the following questions:

2. Respond to question 1 on page 115 of *Between the Lines 11*.
3.
 - a. What do you think the author's reason was for writing this short short story?
 - b. Do you think the author's choice of this format was a good one?
4. Examine the picture that is used to illustrate "It Was a Year Ago." Why do you think this image was selected to illustrate the story?
5. In Lesson 2 of this section, you reviewed the elements of a short story. Compare "It Was a Year Ago" to a short story. What are the similarities and differences? (Hint: Ask yourself what, if anything, is missing in "It Was a Year Ago" that can be found in a short story?)

In order to respond to this question, you may find it helpful to create a chart in your notebook such as the following one. Make the boxes large enough so that you have plenty of space for your responses.

Short Story Elements	"It Was a Year Ago"

Compare your responses with those on page 95 in the Appendix.

Journal Entry 3D

monologue: a long speech in which one person speaks alone

Do you think Doug's visit to the cemetery, his **monologue**, and the feelings expressed in it are realistic? Why or why not?

Do you think the story seems phony in any way? If so, suggest how you would make it more realistic.





Mrs. Jensen: Now that you've had a chance to read an example of flash fiction, do you have a better idea of what it is?

Noah: It's just like the textbook says—a short short story!

Zoe: It really was a story in a flash. Is there any limit to the number of words the writer can use in a piece of flash fiction?

Lee: It was kind of fun to read. Is flash fiction hard to write?

Mrs. Jensen: Take a look at the following article and I think you'll find the answers to your questions.

Flashing for Fun and Profit

S. Joan Popek

What is flash fiction? It is a short-short-short story. The actual word count is debated. Some editors say any story up to 1000 words is flash fiction. Others require under 500 words and some flash fiction is counted at 55 words, but the most popular length (and one of the most often used) is 100 words or less. For our purposes in this article, we will discuss the length of 100 words or less discounting the title and **byline**.

That means using 100 or less words to tell a complete story. A complete story includes all the elements of any story: setting, character, conflict, and resolution. Your flash *must* have a beginning, a middle and an end. Flash fiction is *not* poetry, an essay or a vignette. It *is* a full story.

How do you do that in 100 words or less? Cut-cut-cut. In flash fiction, there is no room for extra adjectives or much description. We must rely upon the reader's perception of his or her world to fill in between the lines. Use active verbs to move your story along. Passive "to be" sentences just won't convey the urgency that flash fiction must have to be successful.

byline: a printed line accompanying a news story, article, or the like, which gives the writer's name

Here is an example:

Long version: The freezing, icy wind which was blowing from the North made John's face feel cold. (15 words)

Flash version: Icy wind bit into John's face. (6 words)

See the impact that action verbs make? Feel the energy? We don't need to know that it was a North wind because if it is icy, it is probably a North wind. Unless the direction of the wind is important to your story, you don't need it anyway. Words like cold are not necessary because if it is "icy," it is cold. You know that so why shouldn't your reader? Trust your audience to fill in the details with their own perceptions. The verb "bit" in the sentence "... bit into John's face." is much more descriptive and (pardon the pun) "biting" than "... made John's face feel cold." Using strong, active verbs gets your point across fast. And fast is what flash fiction is all about.

Setting

Your setting can often be set with your title, giving a sense of place and time so your reader is prepared to enter your story already having an idea of when and where.

Conflict

A difference of opinion—tension to keep the reader reading. It can be verbal, physical, or mental. It doesn't always have to be villain versus hero.

Character

Usually, there is not room for more than two characters, three at the most, but those characters don't always have to be human. They don't even have to be animate. For instance, they could be two park benches arguing about which one has the best view of the lake. See what I mean?

Resolution

Flash fiction usually, but not necessarily, has a twist ending—something that the reader doesn't really expect. I must caution you that a twist ending doesn't mean a totally unexpected ending that leaves the reader feeling stupid because he didn't see it coming. Don't come out of left field with an ending that takes the reader completely by surprise. Leave your reader with feeling of "Ahhh!" not "Boy am I stupid."

As in any story, your reader should feel "into" the story, not alienated by it. He should be able to see the beginning, experience the conflict and feel satisfaction with the conclusion.

Flash fiction is a great way to tighten your writing, and there are many markets for it. Flash pieces can be sold as flash, then enlarged, sold as short stories, then enlarged again and even become a novel with the original flash being the core theme of the work.

Read the flash below. See if you can identify the elements of fiction. What is the setting, the characterization, the conflict, and the resolution?

When you have finished reading, write one of your own. Don't count the words as you write. Just write about one-half a page. Then edit to make sure it has all the elements and a beginning, middle, and end. Then count the words. Don't be surprised if it has more than 100 words. (Most first drafts do.) Then cut-cut-cut. Take out all the unneeded adjectives and passive voice and replace them with strong, action verbs. Voila! You have just written your first flash fiction.

Example Story

The Neighbor's Dog

S. Joan Popek

"Arrrooow!" That damned hound is howling again. Every night!

"Shut up!" I yell out the window.

"Arrrooow!"

I get my gun. I'll send that beast back to Hell where he belongs.

I sneak out to the back fence.

The dog snarls, lunges. His demon eyes blaze.

My gun flashes. Blood and brains splatter, smelling like copper. I poke his body with the gun barrel—dead.

Quiet! I smile and go to bed.

The smell awakens me. Blood and brains! Eyes glowing, he snarls and lunges.

My throat rips as he drags me down into the blackness of Hell with him.

Now you try it. Good luck.

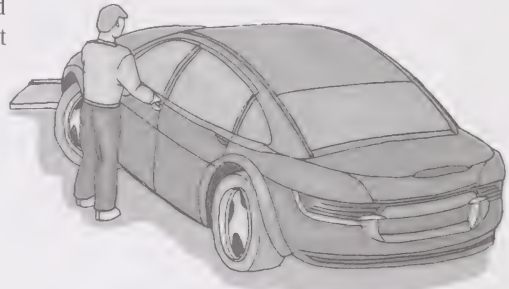
¹ S. Joan Popek, "Flashing for Fun and Profit," 1999, <<http://www.sjoanpopek.com>> (11 February 2003).
Reproduced by permission.

Writing Flash Fiction

You will have an opportunity to write a piece of flash fiction in your Assignment Booklet. To help you prepare for this assignment, following are some suggestions.

Choose Your Subject Matter

Write about what you know best. Avoid writing about characters or settings that you are not at all familiar with. Look for smaller ideas in the larger ones. For example, instead of writing about the complex issue of growing up, write about the first time you got to drive the family car on your own. In other words, limit your subject.



Start in the Middle

Start your story in the middle of the action. You do not have room to explain the setting or the main character in great detail. Do not describe any more than you have to. Let the reader fill in the blanks.

Focus on One Image

Select one powerful image to focus your story on, for example, a shattered windshield. Create a picture with words. In Section 2: Lesson 1 of Module 2, you looked at how specific words and sensory details help create a vivid word picture. You may wish to review that lesson before you write your flash fiction.

Use Active Verbs

Generally the subject of a verb does the action the verb describes. These are active verbs. Sometimes the subject receives the action. When that happens the verb is passive. Look at the following example:

Active and passive verbs are also referred to as active and passive voice.

Active: Kelly *kicked* the ball into the path of the car.

Passive: The ball *was kicked* by Kelly into the path of the car.



Active verbs make your writing more powerful. And, as S. Joan Popek states in her article on flash fiction, strong, active verbs “get your point across fast. And fast is what flash fiction is all about.”



Is that why my computer tells me to change my sentences to active voice instead of passive?

That's right. Of course, not every sentence needs to use the active voice. There are times when the passive voice should be used.



For more information on using active and passive verbs, read “Active and Passive Voice” on page 93 and “Guidelines for Using the Passive Voice” on page 94 of *Communicate!*

Use Allusions

By using references to commonly known stories or historical events, you can save yourself some words. If you were to refer to your main character as a Pinocchio, would your readers know what you meant? Keep in mind that any allusion you use has to be familiar to the reader as well as fit the context of the story.

Create Suspense

Keep your readers guessing until the end. When you hold back information, it pushes your readers to keep reading because they want to know what will happen next and why it is happening.



End with a Twist

Reward your readers with a good payoff—a twist ending. Most flash fiction ends with a twist. A twist ending is comparable to the punch line at the end of a joke. It has an impact on your readers and it provides a resolution to the story. Be careful, though, not to make the ending appear contrived or unrealistic. Remember that your readers should feel satisfied with the ending.





Mrs. Jensen: You may not be able to use all of these strategies in every piece of flash fiction that you write, but even using one or two will help you write an effective short short story.

Lee: Some of these strategies would work for other kinds of writing too, wouldn't they?

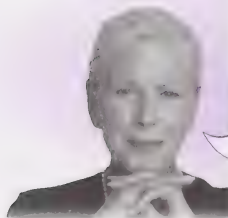
Mrs. Jensen: Good point, Lee! Yes, you could apply these strategies to other kinds of writing.

Portfolio Item 3D



Do question 5 on page 115 of *Between the Lines 11*. If you are not in a classroom situation, share your public service announcement with your teacher, a friend, or family member.

Go to page 8 of Assignment Booklet 3A and respond to questions 6 and 7 of Section 1.



In this lesson, you have explored a different form of short story—flash fiction. You were given a number of strategies to prepare you for writing your own flash fiction. You learned that these strategies are not limited to writing effective flash fiction. They can be used for other kinds of writing as well.

Conclusion



You began this section by answering the question “What is a short story?” To help you respond to this question, you reviewed the elements of a short story. You also looked at some of the literary devices used by writers of short stories. In your quest to increase your understanding of the short story, you looked at how reading relationships, attitudes and preferences, and reading strategies affect your interpretation of the stories you read. You read short story selections and saw how writers craft their stories to produce an overall effect. You ended the section by exploring a slightly different form of short story—flash fiction.

What is a short story? A short story is a brief fictional prose narrative that usually focuses on one character, has a limited setting, and has a single plot. You discovered, however, as you worked through this section that a short story is more. A short story is written to entertain you—to keep you reading to find out how it ends—and to extend your understanding of human nature. By sharing the lives of fictional characters, you may also learn something about yourself.

As you have increased your knowledge of the short story, have you recorded unfamiliar words that you encountered in this section in your vocabulary log? In the next section, you will have the chance to apply what you have learned about short stories to the novel.

Section 2

The Novel: *Of Mice and Men*

In this section, you will read and study *Of Mice and Men*, a novel about ordinary people struggling to clear a path for themselves in life. The characters match their dignity against the pain of loneliness as they strive to find their place in the world, a place where they can feel at home.

By the end of this section you should be able to understand and appreciate that

- some people share special bonds; others have no special bonds
- people may be loners by choice or by circumstance
- dreams can fuel a person's life, but they can also remain unfulfilled
- sacrifices are often acts of love



You will write in your journal a great deal in this section. You will be asked to submit one of these journal entries as part of the assignment at the end of the section. Some of the journal entries will ask you to write personal responses to characters and events in the novel; others will ask you to relate incidents in the novel to incidents in your own life. Throughout the section, you will be encouraged to connect the novel to your own views and experiences.

Lesson 1: What Is a Novel?



Noah: A novel is prose fiction, written mainly to entertain. It's a product of the writer's imagination.

Mei-Ly: A novel is like a short story.

Mr. Murray: What's the difference between the two?

DID YOU KNOW?

The word *fiction* comes from the Latin word *ficito*, which means *to form* or *fashion*.

If asked to name one difference between a novel and a short story, most students would probably say, "A novel is longer." But there are other differences. Think about, or in a small group discuss, some of the differences between a novel and a short story. You may find that brainstorming or clustering is a useful technique that helps you to record your ideas quickly.

1. In your notebook, list in point form the ways in which a short story differs from a novel. You may find it helpful to draw a chart with the following headings in your notebook. Make the boxes large enough so that you have plenty of room for your responses.

Short Story	Novel

Compare your chart with the one on page 96 in the Appendix.

Novels come in all different types. Following are some examples:

- adventure
- romance
- science fiction
- fantasy
- detective/mystery
- historical
- horror

While most novels fall into one of the seven categories listed, others can easily combine two or three types in one story. For example, a novel about the legendary murderer Jack the Ripper might be a horror story set in Victorian England (historical) that follows the efforts of the police (detective) to find the killer.

All seven types of novels mentioned have one thing in common: they attempt to entertain the reader. But there is another type of novel that tries to do more. The realistic novel tries to teach the reader something about life. The realistic novel tries to show life as it is. Its characters are typical people engaged in real-life activities who must make choices. Because readers can relate to the characters, they can learn things from the experiences that the characters have.



It is important to note that most novels—whatever the category—contain elements of reality. Otherwise, readers would not find them believable. For example, a work of fantasy, science fiction, or horror may have realistic characters and situations. On the other hand, realistic novels may incorporate elements of science fiction, fantasy, or horror.

Journal Entry 3E

Which type of novel do you prefer reading? Why do you prefer this type over other types? What type of novel do you avoid reading? Why?

Before You Read

Of Mice and Men—the novel you are about to read—falls into the category of realistic novel. The story is set in the Salinas Valley in California during the Great Depression of the 1930s. The Great Depression was a severe worldwide economic crisis, marked by falling prices and widespread unemployment, which lasted from the end of 1929 to the outbreak of World War II in 1939.

The story involves two agricultural labourers who move from job to job in an attempt to meet their basic necessities. Like most people, they have dreams, but fears and circumstances prevent fulfilment of their dreams. Throughout his novel, Steinbeck comments upon a society in which those who could have accepted others' differences are unchanged and those who are different remain unappreciated.

Portfolio Item 3E

During the Great Depression, millions of people were unemployed, and there was little social assistance to cushion the shock of poverty. Men and women wandered from town to town in search of work, food, and shelter. Do some research on homeless people in today's society. Try to find answers to some of the following questions:

- Are there homeless people in your community?
- What circumstances have led to their homelessness?
- Where do they stay?
- What sort of possessions, if any, do they have?
- What do they do on a daily basis?
- What dreams do they live for?
- Is help available for homeless people? What kind of help?

You may want to ask the librarian in your school or public library to help you. Numerous articles have been written in newspapers and magazines about the topic. As well, you may want to interview people from such agencies as social services, the United Way, or your local food bank.

A Word About Language

In the 1930s, when Steinbeck's novel is set, racial intolerance was prevalent. The conditions in which many black people were forced to live were deplorable. The words they were called were deeply offensive. Today these words are not acceptable. Steinbeck's characters use coarse and racist language. This level of language would be expected of uneducated drifters and labourers of that time period. While the language makes the characters and their situation realistic, keep in mind that such language is inappropriate for use in your compositions for this course.



Eric: This doesn't sound like my kind of novel.

Mrs. Jensen: Of course you might have doubts, but don't judge it until you've read it. When a writer portrays racism, he or she isn't necessarily advocating it. Remember what you learned about reading relationships and attitudes and preferences in Section 1.

Eric: Meet the writer halfway.

Mrs. Jensen: That's right! You will enhance your reading relationship if you approach your reading with an open mind.

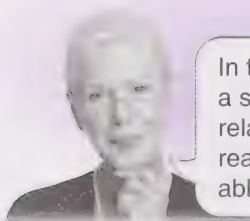
Reading Strategies

2. In Section 1, you reviewed some strategies for reading short stories. Describe the strategies you use when you read novels.

Compare your response with the one on page 96 in the Appendix.



You can apply strategies that you use for reading short stories to novels; however, novels have some special features that require special reading strategies. For information on novel-reading strategies, examine "Reading Novels" on pages 17 to 21 in *Communicate!* You are not asked to answer the questions on page 21, but look them over and think about how these questions and the accompanying checklist could help you get into the novel you are about to read.



In this lesson, you looked at the differences between a short story and a novel; you reviewed your reading relationship; and you examined some strategies for reading novels. In the lessons that follow, you will be able to apply what you've learned.

Lesson 2: Getting into the Novel

Of Mice and Men raises many interesting questions for you to think about while you are reading. For example, what is the difference between a friendship and other types of relationships? How important is friendship? Can you be happy without friends? What sorts of things do friends do for each other? Which quality is most important in a friendship? What makes life happier and worth living? Is there ever a time when life is not worth living? Some of your questions could spark interesting discussions.



Eric: What does it mean when people say they want to find their dreams?

Mrs. Jensen: They're talking about the goals they hope to achieve in life. Everyone's dreams are different. One person may want to be a professional hockey player, another may want to be an actor, and another may simply want to be happy.

Naseem: I read somewhere that *Of Mice and Men* brings up the topic of euthanasia. What is that exactly?

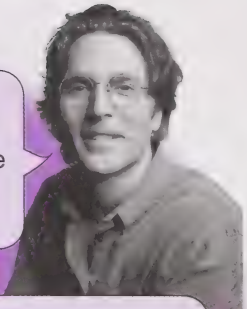
Mrs. Jensen: Euthanasia is a painless killing that is intended to end the suffering of an animal or a person. Euthanasia is a controversial topic, which raises difficult questions.

Lee: You mean like who decides when a person's suffering should be ended?

Zoe: Or whether anyone has the right to end another person's life?

Mrs. Jensen: That's right. What are your opinions?

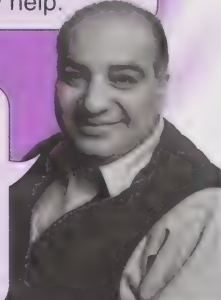
Of Mice and Men is also a story about responsibility and sacrifice. What are your responsibilities to your fellow human beings? What sacrifices should you be prepared to make? Sacrifice involves making choices.



I'm a parent. My main responsibility is to provide for my family and ensure their well-being. I might sacrifice buying things for myself in order to ensure that my family has enough to eat and a decent place to live.



I'm a medical doctor. Because I'm responsible for my patients' well-being, I might sacrifice time with my own family if my patients need my help.



I've been married for thirty-one years. My wife was paralysed in a car accident two years ago. She's still independent in some ways but I'm responsible for many of her needs now. I love her—how could I not put her needs before mine?

1. You are a student. What are your responsibilities? What sacrifices do you make?

Compare your response with the one on page 97 in the Appendix.

About the Author

Before you start *Of Mice and Men*, read the following information about the author, John Steinbeck. This information provides you with a background for the novel.

John Steinbeck (1902–1968) was born in Salinas, California. Writers usually write about what they know, and Steinbeck is no different. Most of his novels, including *Of Mice and Men*, are set in California; many of his characters are based on people he met in his travels. He often wrote about people who have a hard time fitting into society: the poor, the uneducated, and the rebellious. In all of his work, he shows compassion for the underdog. Steinbeck himself knew years of failure in a variety of occupations before establishing himself as one of the world's outstanding writers. His best-known novels are *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Cannery Row*, *East of Eden*, and *Of Mice and Men*. Many of his novels have been made into films.



If you are interested in learning more about Steinbeck and his writing, ask your librarian for help finding information. Or, if you have Internet access, use your favourite search engine to find information about him. Be sure to evaluate the websites that you view for relevance, accuracy, and reliability.

Context Clues



GLENBOW ARCHIVES NC-6129 55B

migrant workers:
people who move
regularly in order to
find work,
especially in
harvesting crops

In Lesson 1, you learned that the language Steinbeck uses in *Of Mice and Men* reflects the characters and the time and place of the story—**migrant workers** during the Depression of the 1930s. You may not have the background to fully understand some of the vocabulary of the story, but you can easily overcome this by using context clues—words or phrases that hint at the meaning of a word. Look for clues in the sentences surrounding the word that is unfamiliar to you. The following example demonstrates context clues in action.

George unslung his *bundle* and dropped it gently on the bank.

On the page before this sentence, you learned that “both carried tight blanket rolls slung over their shoulders.” From this and from prior experience, you can deduce that a *bundle* is probably a blanket roll or bundle carried by hoboes. This deduction is reinforced a little later when George takes cans of beans from his bundle.

2. Use context clues to explain the meaning of the boldfaced terms in each of the following excerpts:
- a. There is a path through the willows and among the **sycamores** . . . In front of the low horizontal limb of a giant sycamore there is an ash pile made by many fires; the limb is worn smooth by men who have sat on it.
 - b. He's a **pugnacious** fellow, attacking anyone the first chance he gets.
 - c. Although yesterday the ocean was calm, today it is **turbulent**.
 - d. The buzz of the doorbell was as **strident** as the cry of an angry crow.
 - e. A **word hoarder** is someone who accumulates words with the same **gusto** and enthusiasm as any stamp, coin, or fossil gatherer.

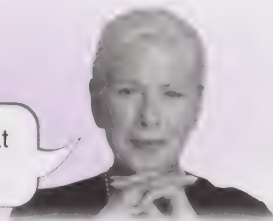
Compare your responses with those on page 97 in the Appendix.

DID YOU KNOW?

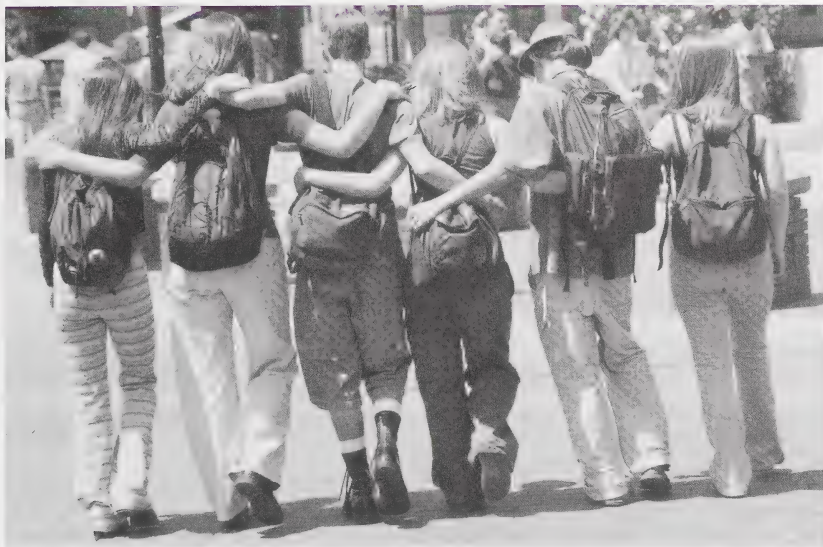
During the Great Depression, large numbers of migrant workers in the United States travelled to California in hopes of bettering their lives. The emotional and physical toll that the Depression took on these people was captured by American photographer, Dorothea Lange (1895–1965). Her now-famous photographs brought attention to the plight of migrant farm workers and motivated others to take action to improve the situation. If you have access to the Internet, you can view many of Lange's photographs online. Use your favourite search engine and the keywords *Dorothea Lange photographs*.

You are ready to read *Of Mice and Men*. Before you begin, look over the lessons so you know what kinds of work you will be asked to do. Keep your journal handy, so that you can jot down your questions, predictions, and any thoughts or ideas that come to mind that you'd like to explore later.

Remember also to add any new words that you encounter to your vocabulary log.



Lesson 3: The Bonds of Friendship



Friends form special bonds. There are expectations in a friendship, things one would expect a friend to feel or do. Friends can develop strong feelings—both positive and negative—toward each other. You have had the opportunity to be involved in friendships and to observe friendships around you.

1. In your notebook, list some expectations you have of your friends and that they would also have of you.
2. Think about, or in a small group discuss, some of the ways you have seen friends behave toward each other to express their feelings. Then write your ideas into your notebook. Use complete sentences.

Compare your responses with those on page 97 in the Appendix.

In *Of Mice and Men*, there are few bonds between the characters. Men such as Slim, Candy, Crooks, and Carlson are loners who interact with each other simply because their work brings them together. People who should be close, such as Curley and his father, or Curley and his wife, seem to have no bond at all between them. Only George and Lennie seem to share a real friendship. In one of their dialogues near the end of the first chapter, Lennie states his idea of what their relationship means:

'But not us! An' why? Because . . . because I got you to look after me, and you got me to look after you, and that's why.'



3. What are the expectations George feels are placed upon him because of Lennie?
4. Is Lennie aware that his physical strength can put him and others into danger? Provide an example from the novel that supports your opinion.

Compare your responses with those on page 98 in the Appendix.

Journal Entry 3F

At times George's attitude toward Lennie is unkind, even mean. At other times, it is the opposite. Describe the way George really feels toward Lennie. It is obvious that Lennie needs George, but why does George need Lennie? Would he be better off without him?

If you take a close look at your friends, you will probably agree that they all have different personalities. Each one has qualities that are likeable and that make him or her pleasant to be with. Each friend, however, probably also has at least one quality that is not so attractive.

5. In a realistic novel like *Of Mice and Men*, characters have positive (attractive) and negative (unattractive) qualities. In your notebook, draw the chart that follows. Make the boxes large enough so that your responses will fit. List two positive and two negative qualities for each of the major characters listed. For each of the minor characters, list one positive and one negative quality.

Major Characters	Positive Qualities	Negative Qualities
George		
Lennie		
Slim		
Candy		
Curley		
Minor Characters	Positive Qualities	Negative Qualities
Curley's wife		
Carlson		
the Boss		
Crooks		

Compare your responses with those on page 98 in the Appendix.



Perhaps the most positive character in the book is Slim. He is a role model for the other men. Compared to characters who act as leaders, such as the Boss and Curley, Slim comes across as a true leader. Think about, or in a group discuss, the following questions and then write your responses in your notebook.

6. Compare the qualities of Slim and the Boss. Why would most people rather work for Slim than for the Boss?
7. At the end of the novel, Slim says, “‘Never you mind . . . A guy got to sometimes.’ How does this quotation show Slim’s understanding of the relationship between George and Lennie?

Compare your responses with those on page 99 in the Appendix.

Loneliness

Apart from their work, most of the other characters in *Of Mice and Men* share only one thing—their loneliness.

8. In *Of Mice and Men*, what facts about the farm, the job, and the lives of the workers reinforce the idea of loneliness?

Many of the characters are alone by choice, but others have loneliness forced on them. Many works of literature deal with feelings of prejudice and acts of discrimination—the deliberate building of barriers between people. In *Of Mice and Men*, the effects of prejudice can be seen in the character of Crooks. He is the victim of racial discrimination. Because he is black, he is forced to live apart.

9.
 - a. What does the description of Crooks’ room tell you about him?
 - b. How does he deal with his loneliness?
10. Two other characters who experience prejudice are Candy and Curley’s wife. Why are these two characters excluded by the others?

Compare your responses with those on page 99 in the Appendix.

Journal Entry 3G

Apart from Curley’s wife, all of the characters in the novel are male. Suppose the same story were retold with only female characters. Would there be any differences in the attitudes and behaviour of the characters? Would there be the same amount of violence or discrimination or loneliness? In your response, you can either describe the differences or you can show them by rewriting a brief scene from the novel.

Go to page 11 of Assignment Booklet 3A and respond to questions 1 and 2 of Section 2.



In this lesson, you looked at the relationships of the characters in *Of Mice and Men*, and at how discrimination and loneliness affected their behaviours.

Lesson 4: Understanding Character



In Section 1, you learned to base your understanding of a character on the description of the character, on what the character says or does, and on what other characters say about him or her. In the opening chapter of the novel, the reader learns of Lennie's mental disability from the author's description, from George's reaction to Lennie, and from Lennie's speech.

1. List three clues from chapter 1 that indicate that Lennie has a mental disability.
2. Instead of simply stating that Lennie has a mental disability, John Steinbeck uses **similes** comparing Lennie to various living things that are less intelligent than an average adult human being. List at least two such similes from chapter 1.

3. Consider, also, the ways in which the characters of Curley and his wife are conveyed to the reader. What does Candy say about Curley's wife?
4. What things does Curley's wife do that tell you she is very lonely?
5. Curley is both lonely and insecure. How does he express these feelings?
6. Halfway through the second chapter, Candy helps the reader to understand why Curley dislikes Lennie. What does he say about Curley? Quote the lines.

Compare your responses with those on page 99 in the Appendix.

Word Choices

Writers choose their words very carefully so that their message is easy to understand. Writers of stories are also careful when they choose the words that their characters speak. A character's choice of words and way of speaking give clues to the reader about the character's background. A character's speech may reveal information about his or her economic and social status and may indicate the character's level of education and sophistication.

Since John Steinbeck is a realistic writer, he tries to render his characters' ways of speaking as accurately as possible. In *Of Mice and Men*, his characters are ordinary people; therefore, their speech is a mixture of slang, colloquialisms, and **idioms**.

7. Study the following sentences that have been taken from the novel. Once you have read them all, rewrite them in your notebook using standard English.
 - a. "I won't get in no trouble, George. I ain't gonna say a word."
 - b. "Maybe tomorra. Le's wait till tomorra."
 - c. "Gosh, she was purty."
 - d. "Gotta bad gut ache. Them . . . damn turnips give it to me. I knowed they was going to before I ever eat 'em."
 - e. "Well, I wasn't hurtin' 'em none. I jus' had mine in my lap pettin' it."
 - f. "Want me to tell ta tell ya what'll happen? They'll take ya to the booby hatch. They'll tie ya up with a collar, like a dog."
8. What effect does rewriting the preceding sentences in standard English have?

Compare your responses with those on page 100 in the Appendix.

You may wish to review the use of colloquialisms, regionalisms, and slang in Section 1: Lesson 1 of Module 2.



Naseem: If Steinbeck had written the dialogue in standard English, the characters wouldn't seem very realistic. They would have sounded phony.

Eric: I agree with Naseem that the colloquialisms and slang make the characters more believable, but sometimes I had trouble understanding them. For example, Crooks is described as a stable buck. I figured out that meant he was the person who worked in the barn—the one who kept it clean and fed the horses. But it also talked about George and Lennie bucking barley. I've heard of bucking wood, which means cutting wood into lengths and stacking it for firewood. I guess bucking barley must have something to do with handling barley.

Mr. Murray: You're on the right track. Large burlap bags were filled with barley as it came from the threshing machine. George and Lennie had been hired to load—or to buck—the filled grain bags, which weighed about 34 kilograms, onto a wagon. The loaded wagon would then be driven from the field by a skinner, a person who drives teams of mules or horses.

If you have difficulty with the vocabulary and colloquial expressions used in the novel, you may find the following website helpful:



http://www.lausd.k12.ca.us/Belmont_HS/mice/index.html

You will have an opportunity in your Assignment Booklet to write dialogue in which your characters use colloquialisms or slang. To help you prepare for this assignment, review the following suggestions for writing dialogue.

Writing Dialogue



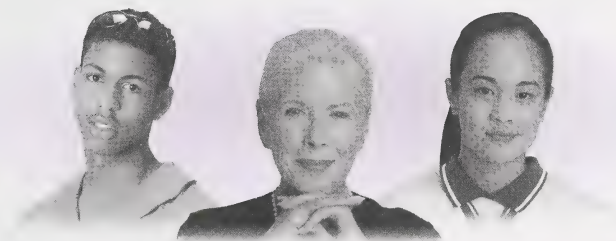
Read the information on direct speech and dialogue under the heading “Quotation Marks” on pages 129 to 131 of *Communicate!*

9. Do question b) under “Apply It!” on page 131 of *Communicate!*

Compare your response with the one on page 100 in the Appendix.

Dialogue in a story can be very effective in revealing character and conflict. Here are some suggestions to consider:

- Dialogue should serve a purpose, such as revealing character, furthering plot, or highlighting conflict. You should not include dialogue just for the sake of having dialogue in the story.
- Keep your speeches fairly short. The dialogue should move back and forth between the characters, just as it would if people were speaking face-to-face.
- Remember that people often speak using sentence fragments. This should be reflected in the dialogue of your story.



Mrs. Jensen: Look at the following example of dialogue. Tell me what you think is wrong with it.

“Turn left at the lights,” said Shasta.

“That’s what I was going to do,” Matt said.

“You don’t have to be rude,” Shasta said. “I was only trying to be helpful. How did I know that you knew the way?”

“You’re always telling me what to do,” he said.

“I’m sorry,” she said. “It won’t happen again.”

Noah: The repetition of the word *said* was tiresome.

Mei-Ly: I agree. Plus, I really didn’t know how things were being said. It would help my understanding of the characters if the writer not only varied the word *said*, but also added some description to tell us more about the relationship.

Mrs. Jensen: Good points! Check out the following version. Do you think it is better?

“Turn left at the lights,” directed Shasta as she touched up her lipstick.

“That’s what I was going to do,” Matt barked. His left hand tightened its grip on the small ring box that he had carefully wrapped that morning.

“You don’t have to be rude,” snapped Shasta, “I was only trying to be helpful. How did I know that you knew the way?”

“You’re always telling me what to do,” he complained as he relaxed his hold on the ring box. He glanced briefly at Shasta from the corner of his eye.

“I’m sorry,” she said as she jammed her lipstick into her purse. “It won’t happen again!”

She did not notice as he put his hand out of the window and released a small box tied with a blue satin ribbon.



That’s a lot better. Now I know what’s going on and I can picture the characters. The conflict is also clear. This reminds me a bit of the flash fiction we read earlier.

Finding Alternatives to the Word *Said*

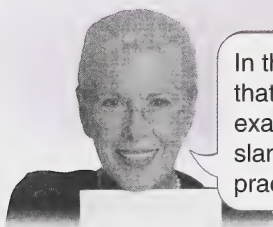
When you write dialogue, you usually use a speaker tag (also known as a dialogue tag) to indicate the speaker. The speaker tag consists of a noun or pronoun, a verb, and sometimes descriptive modifiers. The most common verb is *said*. You can make your dialogue more effective by using a variety of verbs with descriptive modifiers. In the following examples the speaker tags have been bolded:

- “You seen a girl around here?” **he demanded angrily.**
 - **Lennie spoke craftily,** “Tell me—like you done before.”
 - **His eyes were full of wonder,** “I bet we could swing her,” **he repeated softly.**
10. What other words can you use instead of *said* to provide some variety and specific detail in the following dialogue? Be sure you use correct punctuation.
- a. “You just started that book,” I said, “and you’re already reading the last page.”
“That’s how I always read mystery stories,” she said.

- b. He said, "What's going on here?"
"Nothing," said the boy.
- c. "Come down from that tower," said the man.
"I can't move," said Robin.

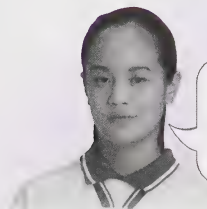
Compare your responses with those on page 101 in the Appendix.

Go to page 13 of Assignment Booklet 3A and respond to question 3 of Section 2.



In this lesson, you reviewed the ways that writers reveal their characters. You examined the use of colloquialisms and slang in developing characters, and you practised writing dialogue.

Lesson 5: Dreams—The Search for Meaning



It's all set. I plan to finish high school, go to NAIT to study graphic arts, and then I'd like to do some travelling.

I don't know what I want to do. All of my friends have big plans, but I don't want the same things they want. I can't seem to make up my mind.



Everyone has different wants and needs that lead to different paths in life. You have to choose a goal or follow a dream that makes sense to you—regardless of what others think.

1. In *Of Mice and Men*, George seems to have two dreams for himself.
 - a. Describe his dream when he is angry with Lennie.
 - b. Describe his dream when he is more calm and thoughtful.

Compare your responses with those on page 101 in the Appendix.

Generally, a dream or goal should be realistic if a person is to have any hope of achieving it. Consider the following example:

Margo, a grade 11 student, tells her friends that she will buy a brand-new car before she graduates. Although she has had her part-time job for almost a year, she has virtually no money saved because she likes to spend it on clothes, make-up, ski trips, concerts, and going out with friends. If she were to save every penny that she earns between now and graduation, Margo probably could buy one of the least expensive cars on the market—provided that the price does not go up by the time she is ready to buy. There may, however, not be enough money left over for insurance. How realistic is the goal that Margo has set for herself?



Journal Entry 3H

Have you ever achieved something after someone warned you that your goal was unrealistic? What was the goal? Why did the person think it was unrealistic? Did you ever find yourself agreeing with the person? How did you manage to overcome obstacles and achieve your goal?

2. Give reasons why George's dream, at first, seems unrealistic.
3. Lennie has a dream that is connected to George's dream. What is it?
4. When Candy offers to become partners in the farm, the dream suddenly becomes possible. Why do you think that Candy, a mere acquaintance, would suddenly offer George all his savings to help buy a farm?
5. Think about, or in a group discuss, examples in which one person's unrealistic dream has been realized with the help of others who have been inspired by the person's enthusiasm for the dream. List your examples in your notebook.
6. Even Crooks, a bitter man, is stirred by George's dream. He sees the possibility of a life in which he will be judged for his actions, not his skin colour, but his enthusiasm is short-lived. Who brings him back to reality and how?



Compare your responses with those on page 101 in the Appendix.

7. Even Curley's wife has a dream, but hers is a dream of the past, not the future. It produces bitterness in her when she thinks of the life she believes that she could have had. Any life she can make for herself now seems pale by comparison. What was her dream and why did it fail, according to her?

Compare your response with the one on page 101 in the Appendix.

George and Lennie are good men at heart. Their dream is possible, and they deserve happiness, but it is not to be. If life is often described as tragic, it is because people do not always get what they deserve. Some obstacles are too great to overcome.

8. What prevents Lennie and George from achieving their dream?
9. What does George's response to Lennie's action tell you about George's belief in the dream?

Authors often use foreshadowing to give readers hints about the outcome of a story. In *Of Mice and Men*, George becomes more and more convinced that his dream of buying a farm is going to be realized. But right from the beginning of the novel, there are hints that suggest George's dream will not have a happy ending.

10. In a small group or by yourself, look through the first two chapters of the novel for examples of foreshadowing that suggest that George's dream will not be achieved. List them in your notebook.

Compare your responses with those on page 101 in the Appendix.

The Dreams of Mice and Men

The title, *Of Mice and Men*, provides insights into the different dreams that are not realized in the novel. The title is an allusion to a line from a poem called "To a Mouse" by the Scottish poet, Robert Burns. Burns' writing focused on the strivings and difficulties of the common farming people among whom he lived. Their lives may not have been great, but their hearts were full of dreams.

You can listen to a reading of an extract of Robert Burns' poem "To a Mouse"¹ on your *English Language Arts 20-2 Audio CD*. You can find two versions: one written in Burns' eighteenth century English and one written in modern English. If you would like to read two stanzas of the poem, turn to page 107 in your Appendix.

In the poem, a mouse builds its nest in a field and prepares for winter, only to have the nest turned over by a man and his plough. The poet suggests to us that no matter how well a man or a mouse plans for the future, their worlds can be turned upside down in a moment, leaving behind emptiness and despair.

¹ Robert Burns, "To a Mouse," spoken by David Sibbald <<http://www.robertburns.plus.com/voicemouse.htm>> (10 March 2003). Reproduced by permission of David Sibbald.



Journal Entry 31

What is your dream for the future? What plans are you making to achieve your dream? What obstacles stand in your way, and how do you plan to overcome those obstacles?

Go to page 15 of Assignment Booklet 3A and respond to question 4 of Section 2.



In this lesson, you explored the importance of dreams in the novel *Of Mice and Men* and in your own life. You looked at how Steinbeck used foreshadowing and allusion to develop his novel.

Lesson 6: Sacrifices—Making Choices

What would go through your mind if you had to watch a loved one suffer for weeks and months with a terminal illness? Perhaps you have had this experience.

What would go through a doctor's mind if he or she was asked to end a patient's suffering?

Following are two articles about two terminally ill patients. Each of the individuals deals with his illness differently.

As you read the articles, ask yourself if you would act as David Lewis acted or as Michael Rodernick acted.



Time Running Out for Man Who Gave the Gift of Death

"I'll put a plastic bag over my head, take some pills, and I'll die"

– David Lewis

Ken MacQueen
Southam News
Vancouver

Just 38 years old, David Lewis is measuring out the rest of his life in weeks.

A stroke, brain tumors and other manifestations of the AIDS virus have left him too sick and frail to leave home most days. But he kept an appointment Wednesday night, at great physical and emotional cost.

Lewis had one last thing to give his friends: the gift of death.

He sat at the front of a west-end community hall and told an overflow crowd how he plans to kill himself.

"I'll put a plastic bag over my head, take some pills, and I'll die," he told almost 200 people. Some were elderly, some were health care workers; some were ill and planning their own deaths.

"There is no hope. There is no choice. I'm not coming back," Lewis said matter-of-factly.

"I'm going to go to a slow dragging death over the next few weeks, is what I'm told. Until I'm gaga. Until I'm not mentally there. Until, physically, I'm incontinent.

"I know what's coming up for me in the future and it's pretty close. I don't want that."

Lewis, a psychologist and a director of the Vancouver Persons With AIDS Society, created an international controversy in June by admitting to the media that he had helped eight terminally-ill friends take their own lives with prescription drugs.

He was an instant celebrity. Police and the Crown attorney's office considered charging him with assisting a suicide, an offence punishable by 14 years in jail. They dropped the idea because he would not name those who died.

Lewis had the virus himself at the time, but he was still robust and mobile. Death seemed a distant threat. He poured his energy into planning a seminar on euthanasia, working with members of the Oregon-based Hemlock Society, an organization that promotes the right of terminally ill people to commit suicide.

Lewis was struck down less than a month ago.

¹ Ken MacQueen, "Time Running Out for Man Who Gave the Gift of Death," 10 August 1990. Material reprinted with express permission of Edmonton Journal Group Inc., a CanWest Partnership.

Dying Man Chooses Life

Justine Wong
Atrebla Weekly News
Regina

Fifty-three-year-old Michael Rodernick, who in March made a public plea for a doctor to anonymously assist him in euthanasia, has changed his mind.

Rodernick, who has multiple myeloma, a form of cancer that attacks the bones, lives in constant pain and is too weak to commit suicide on his own. He made the plea when doctors told him he has only two months to live.

Rodernick changed his mind after talking with his family. He now hopes to live long enough to attend his daughter's graduation from high school in June.

The ending of a person's life in order to stop that person's terminal suffering is called *euthanasia*, or more commonly, "mercy killing." Euthanasia is a controversial topic. For many people, hastening a person's death is murder. Other people disagree and point to the person's quality of life as a determining factor. For example, they would argue that if a person's life is reduced to total physical pain, that life cannot be said to have any quality left in it.

In *Of Mice and Men*, Lennie's death has been called an example of mercy killing. At first, this notion seems odd, since Lennie is healthy and active, and full of optimism about his farm full of rabbits. But George regards the murder as mercy killing, and Slim agrees with him: "'Never you mind,' said Slim, 'A guy got to sometimes.'"

To understand their reasoning, you have to look at the other deaths in the novel, since they serve to foreshadow the final scene.

1. The first death is Lennie's killing of the mouse. What does this event tell you about Lennie?
2. Another killing is the shooting of Candy's dog. Why does Candy give in and allow his dog to be shot?



Compare your responses with those on page 102 in the Appendix.

Candy must wrestle with his feelings of moral responsibility. The dog is his; the dog is completely dependent on him. It is Candy's responsibility to decide what is right and what is wrong for his dog.

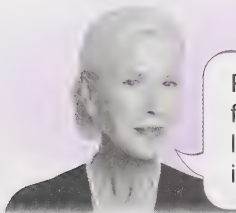
3. Candy is troubled by the fact that he let Carlson, a cold, uncaring person, shoot his dog. What does he realize he should have done instead of letting Carlson kill his dog?
4. Candy allows his dog to be killed because of his feelings of compassion and mercy. Slim also feels compassion and mercy for the potential suffering of the puppies. Rather than watch them starve slowly, he takes responsibility and ends their suffering quickly by drowning them. But Lennie has no such feelings when he kills his new puppy. What is his reaction to the puppy's death?
5. Only one thing seems to make Lennie truly afraid. What is it?
6. If George had not killed Lennie, what do you think would have happened?
7. Given your answer to the previous question, and given what George has learned from the scene in which Candy's dog is killed, why do you think George feels he must kill Lennie?

Compare your responses with those on page 102 in the Appendix.

Journal Entry 3J

Suppose Lennie's killing of Curley's wife had taken place today somewhere in Alberta. Do you think George's reasons for killing Lennie would be valid today? Could the killing still be called an act of responsibility? Suppose you have just encountered George on his way to kill Lennie. What would you say to him?

Go to page of 15 Assignment Booklet 3A and respond to questions 5 and 6 of Section 2.



People in novels, and in real life, are faced with difficult choices. In this lesson, you examined the controversial issue of euthanasia.

Conclusion



In this section, you read the novel *Of Mice and Men*. In the relationship between George and Lennie, you saw the importance of maintaining friendships and dreams as a defence against loneliness. You also realized the need for people in any relationship to accept responsibility for others as well as for themselves—a responsibility that can lead to difficult choices.

You looked closely at the characters in *Of Mice and Men*. You saw that Steinbeck uses a variety of methods to reveal his characters. By having his characters use speech that is appropriate to their situation, Steinbeck creates realistic characters. You also looked at Steinbeck's use of foreshadowing and allusion. As well, you practised using reading strategies and context clues, and you tried your hand at writing dialogue containing colloquialisms and slang. Throughout this section, you were given journal suggestions that provided you with the opportunity to connect the story to your own views and experiences.

In the next section, you will examine some of the major symbols and themes in *Of Mice and Men*. You will also explore the style and structure that Steinbeck used in writing *Of Mice and Men*.

Section 3

Symbols, Themes, and Style

People spend their lives making sense of the information around them. Sometimes the information is clear and easy to interpret—like the message conveyed by a traffic sign. Sometimes there seems to be too much information and people are overwhelmed. Often it seems that there is not enough information available, and people have difficulty deciding how to interpret the confusing bits of information that they have.

At other times a message or sign that on the surface appears to have just one, simple meaning actually has a more complex meaning or perhaps even more than one meaning. It is these other meanings in literature that you will focus on in this section—the meanings that help you to gain a deeper understanding of life.

In this section, you will examine some of the symbols in the novel you have read. You will also learn about theme, and you will examine how the term applies to the novel you have just read. To end the section, and your study of the novel, you will look at the style Steinbeck uses in his writing *Of Mice and Men*.



Lesson 1: Another Way to Say Something



What do the preceding images have in common? If you said they all stand for something, you would be correct. Each one is a **symbol**—something that stands for something else. For example, the dove is a symbol of peace. The flag is a symbol of Canada. The skull and crossbones is a symbol that appears on the label of poisonous substances. A handshake is a symbol of friendliness while a fist is a symbol of anger.

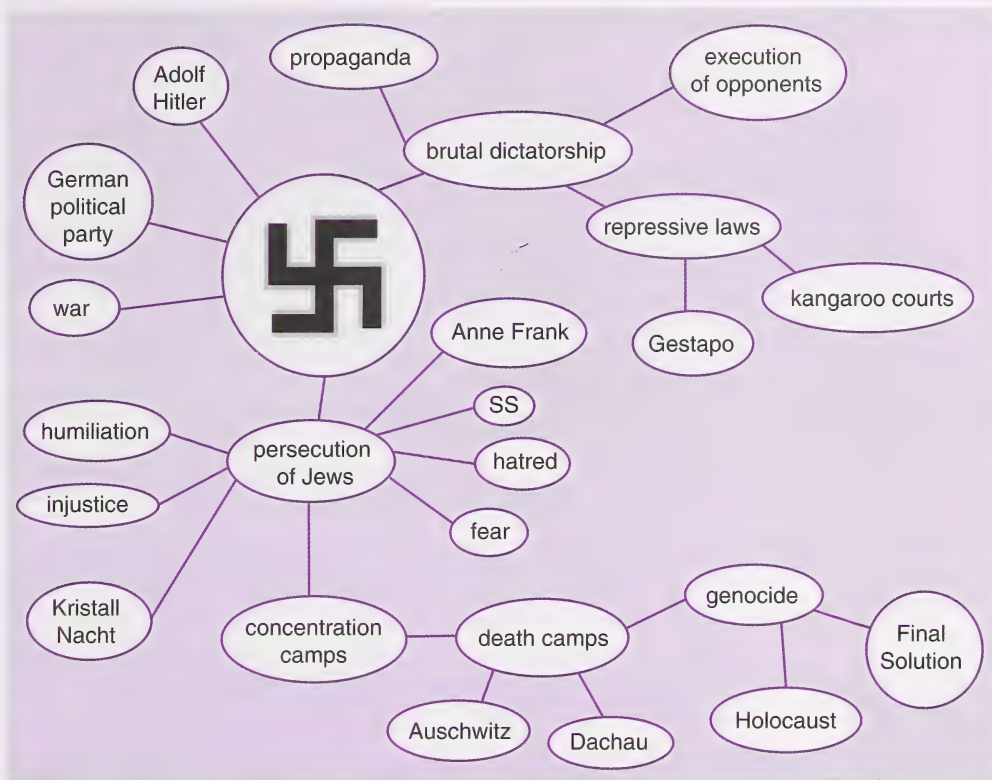
Symbolism



So what's the difference between a symbol and a sign?

Symbols generally have more than one layer of meaning. At one level, for instance, the cross simply represents one religion among many. To a devout Christian, however, it has a much deeper significance, representing a depth of feeling, commitment, and faith. A Nazi swastika at one level simply represents a political party in power in Germany from 1933 to 1945. To a German Jew at that time, however, it would have meant persecution and dehumanization; it would no doubt have aroused feelings of terror, hatred, and anger. To someone of the Hindu faith, the swastika has a completely different meaning; for centuries it has been a symbol of the circle of life.

Study the following cluster of ideas associated with the swastika that was done by a Grade 11 social studies student.



This complex of emotions and ideas distinguishes a symbol from a mere sign. A sign, such as a stop sign or a figure on the label of a shirt that indicates that it should be dry-cleaned, brings to mind only a single meaning.

Literary Symbols

A **literary symbol** is a concrete image—an object, a person, a situation, an action—that occurs in a piece of writing and that is meant to bring to mind a cluster of ideas and/or emotions in the reader. It will have a **literal** meaning within the story, but it suggests other meanings as well.

In “Paid-up Member,” the poppies have a symbolic meaning. Poppies are a symbol of fallen soldiers and the recognition of the price they paid in fighting for their country. In “Paid-up Member,” the poppies symbolize the character of Dickie. They are representative of the admirable qualities that he possesses. They continue to symbolize Dickie’s character even after he dies—he, too, is a fallen soldier.



literal: actual

Hunting for Symbols

The ability to recognize and interpret literary symbols is important in a perceptive reader, but there is a danger in looking for symbols. Students who are just becoming aware of literary symbolism often go wild in their hunt, seeing symbols everywhere—in places writers never intended them to be. Most details in a story are purely literal; do not try to turn everything into a symbol. It is probably better to miss an intended symbol than to twist a story's meaning by seeing symbols where there simply are not any. Here are three hints that should help you recognise literary symbols.

- Literary symbols are almost always repeated and emphasized throughout a story. If a detail is referred to in passing or is not stressed, probably it is not meant to symbolize anything.
- Because a symbol represents a cluster of ideas, it may be hard to label precisely. This does not mean, though, that it represents anything anyone says it does; its possible meanings depend on the context in which it occurs.
- A literary symbol's meaning occurs in the story, not outside it. For example, in one story rain may symbolize hope and life, in another death and destruction, and in another, nothing at all. Do not bring any preconceived ideas about the symbolic meanings of things into a story you read, for instance, that an owl always symbolizes wisdom; let the story tell you what something symbolizes in that piece of literature.

In some works of literature, symbolism is extremely important. When readers fail to recognize the symbolism, they may find that they are unable to fully understand the meaning of the work. In other works of literature, like the story "Paid-up Member," symbols add depth and new dimensions to the story, but they are not vital to the reader's understanding of the work. Other literary works contain no symbols at all; everything can be taken at face value.

Symbolism in *Of Mice and Men*

Many authors, like John Steinbeck, use symbols in their novels and short stories to help the reader understand some of the ideas that they want to present.

1. There are several symbols in the novel *Of Mice and Men*. Look at the setting first. The novel begins and ends in the same place, but the events at the end are far different from the events at the beginning.
 - a. Describe the mood of the scene at the beginning and the scene at the end.
 - b. Based on these differences, what might you conclude about the setting?

Compare your responses with those on page 103 in the Appendix.

The following class discussion may help you to understand some of the symbols in *Of Mice and Men*.



Mrs. Jensen: What symbols did you find in the novel *Of Mice and Men*?

Zoe: Animals were mentioned quite often. There were always animals in and around the pool of water where the story begins and ends. Animals like the water snake, the heron, rabbits, and mice are mentioned several times.

Lee: That's right. And because we know that things that have a symbolic meaning are mentioned several times, we can assume that at least a few of those animals are important symbols. But which ones?

Mrs. Jensen: Any ideas?

Naseem: I've been thinking about the title, *Of Mice and Men*. There are supposed to be clues about a story in the title, right? Most of the characters in the story are men. It makes you wonder why the word *mice* is in there. I'd say that if any of the animals mentioned is symbolic, then mice would definitely be included.

Mrs. Jensen: You've got a point there. What would mice symbolize?

Eric: Mice are small, gentle animals. They are timid and easily frightened.

Noah: They are not very intelligent. They operate largely on instinct.

Mrs. Jensen: Let's summarize some of your ideas about mice. They're small, gentle, timid, easily frightened, instinctive, and not too bright.

Eric: That description kind of fits Lennie, don't you think?

Mrs. Jensen: Yes, you're right; it does.

Naseem: So the mice are symbolic of Lennie's life? Okay, I can see that.

Lee: How is knowing that mice in this novel are symbols supposed to help the reader understand this novel?

Mrs. Jensen: If mice are symbolic of Lennie's life, and you know a lot about mice, then you also know a lot more about Lennie than what the author is telling you directly.

Lee: Oh, now I get it! Symbols add more depth to the characters.

Mei-Ly: You know, Lennie is compared to other animals too. At the beginning of the novel he is compared to a bear dragging its paws as it walks. Lennie's hands are frequently referred to as paws. He is also compared to a horse when he drinks water from the green pool. George describes him as being as strong as a bull.

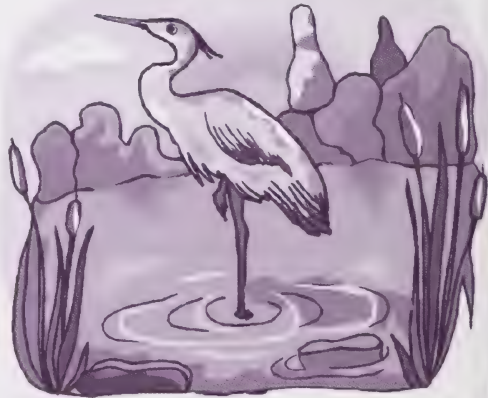
Eric: Yeah, and when Curley tries to pick a fight with him, Lennie "bleated with terror." When I read that passage, the image of a lamb came to mind. It seemed strange to associate a big, powerful man like Lennie with a lamb. I think that's why I remembered it.

Mrs. Jensen: Why do you think that Steinbeck linked Lennie's appearance, actions, and qualities to those of animals?

Zoe: Maybe Lennie has more in common with animals than with people.

2. There are other symbols in the novel *Of Mice and Men*. Try your hand at interpreting the following symbols.

- a. The heron is mentioned at the beginning of the novel just as George and Lennie come to the green pool. A few pages later, just before Lennie goes to get firewood, the author mentions that a water snake slipped along on the surface of the pool. The heron and water snake are mentioned again at the beginning of the last chapter. The heron stands silently and eats the unsuspecting little snake. In the context of this novel, what do you think the heron and the snake symbolize?



- b. Authors include only those details that add to the message they want to convey. Steinbeck includes details about Candy's dog. Obviously, there is something important about the dog and its death. What does the dog symbolize?

Compare your responses with those on page 103 in the Appendix.



Noah: Maybe I'm looking for symbols where they don't exist, but it seems to me that Lennie's last name may have a symbolic meaning. His last name is Small and many of his actions remind me of the way a small child acts. He is very child-like.

Naseem: You know, you're right. Lennie was dependent on George the way that small children are dependent on their parents.

Lee: Yeah. He liked to pet puppies and rabbits and touch things.

Zoe: He imitated some of George's actions and often repeated what George said. And like a small child, Lennie loved to hear familiar stories time and time again.

Eric: Like the story George always told of their dream farm, the place that they were going to buy in the future, where Lennie would tend the rabbits.

Noah: All of those things reminded me of a small child so that's why I thought that Lennie's last name is symbolic.

Authors choose their characters' names carefully. Many of these names have symbolic importance.

3. The names of some of Steinbeck's characters have symbolic significance.
 - a. George's last name is Milton, the same as that of a famous poet who believed in the possibility of a perfect world. How is George's last name appropriate?
 - b. How does Curley's name suit him?
 - c. How is the name Crooks appropriate?
 - d. Do you think that Slim's name is symbolic?
 - e. Is there any significance to the fact that Curley's wife's name is never mentioned?

Compare your responses with those on page 103 in the Appendix.

Journal Entry 3K

Think of an important symbol in your own life. It might be an object or a setting, but it should be something that has taken on a special meaning for you. What is this symbol? How did it come to acquire special meaning for you? Has the object or its meaning changed for you with the passage of time?

Go to page 1 of Assignment Booklet 3B and respond to questions 1 and 2 of Section 3.



In this lesson, you explored the meaning of the terms *symbol* and *literary symbol*. You then examined the use of symbolism in *Of Mice and Men*. In the next lesson, you will look at theme and how it applies to the novel.

Lesson 2: Ideas About Life

Writers of fiction want to make their readers think. What readers think about is often referred to as theme. Theme, as you learned in Lesson 2 of Section 1, is the central idea or insight about life that the writer wants to reveal to you through the course of the story. The writer will not often state directly what the theme of a piece of fiction is, but instead will only suggest or imply it. That is why you may say, "That story really makes me think." You are figuring out what the writer is implying.

The theme in a work of good fiction is not simply a moral lesson. In fact, many writers deny knowing what their themes are. They will simply say, "I wanted to show my readers the way life can be. If they figure something out, all the better." The key point is the writer wants to *show* you something, not *tell* you something.



Theme should help to give you an understanding of the literature you are reading, as well as of life in general. Remember, however, that authors of fictional works do not state their themes directly. A theme is expressed indirectly, through the story itself. There may be many possible themes for a story. It is up to you to decide the theme for yourself, based on your careful reading of details in the story.

Themes in *Of Mice and Men*

One of the themes in the novel *Of Mice and Men* deals with dreams. In life, some people long for things such as wealth, independence, land, or popularity. In the novel, George wants a place of his own where he can be the boss; Lennie wants rabbits to tend; Candy wants security in his old age; Crooks wants to be respected.

1. None of these four characters achieves his dream. What statement might the novel be making about the pursuit of dreams?

Another theme in the novel has to do with loneliness. Nearly everyone in the novel is a loner. Only George and Lennie have a special bond. What causes loneliness for the others? Look at their backgrounds: Candy is old; Crooks is black; Curley's wife is the only woman on the farm. They are all poor. Each of them suffers isolation for one reason or another.

2. What statement might John Steinbeck be trying to make about loneliness?

Compare your responses with those on page 104 in the Appendix.

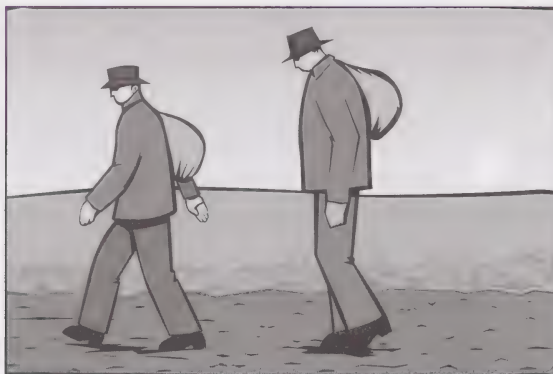
Reading a novel should help you understand yourself and the world you live in a little better. In every good novel, you meet unique characters. You look at their strengths and weaknesses, and at how they accept their responsibilities. You examine the way in which they deal with challenges and setbacks, and at the realizations they make in the process. Hopefully, the things you learn from these characters can be applied to your own situation.

Go to page 4 of Assignment Booklet 3B and respond to question 3 of Section 3.



In this lesson, you examined the term *theme* as it applies to literature and you explored some of the themes in the novel *Of Mice and Men*. In the next lesson, you will look at the style and structure Steinbeck used in writing *Of Mice and Men*.

Lesson 3: Style and Structure



Style

Look at the picture above. The artist has chosen to represent Lennie and George using simple, strong lines. As in visual art, the style of a piece of writing reflects the choices the writer makes. Style is concerned with how a writer says something. Style includes word choice, tone, sentence length, literary devices, and structure or format.

On first reading, the language used in *Of Mice and Men* appears to be very simple. The tone is conversational and direct. The use of colloquialisms, idioms, and slang reflects the realism of Steinbeck's characters. The style fits in well with the theme of ordinary people.

While his language and style are ordinary and simple, Steinbeck's sentences are carefully constructed. Many of his descriptions are almost like poetry. To achieve this effect, Steinbeck has used such devices as **alliteration**, similes, **parallelism**, and repetition.



I know what alliteration and similes are—and repetition, too. But I'm not sure about parallelism.

The following description should help you to understand these terms as well as gain some expertise in their use.



Alliteration and Similes

Alliteration—the repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of a line or a series of words—contributes to rhythm in writing. Writers use alliteration to gain attention, to bind phrases together, and to create a musical effect.

Look at the following sentence from the first paragraph of the novel *Of Mice and Men*:

The water is warm too, for it has slipped twinkling over the yellow sands in the sunlight before reaching the narrow pool.

Notice the repetition of the *w* sounds in the first clause and the *s* sounds in the second one. Writers realize that soft consonants (*s, m, n, l, r*) sound pleasant to the ear while hard consonants (*b, p, d, t, k*) sound harsh. By selecting the appropriate sound, a writer can establish a particular mood. The use of soft sounds in the preceding sentence gives the reader a sense of stillness and quiet.

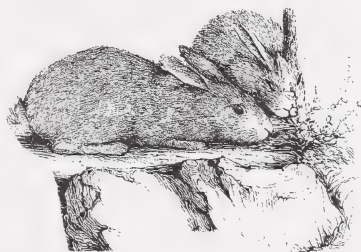
1. With a partner, or in a small group, look for other examples of alliteration in the first few pages of the novel. Read your examples aloud to hear the repeated sounds. What mood or feeling do the sounds convey?

Compare your examples with those on page 104 in the Appendix.

Writers often use similes to create word pictures or images. Comparing an object or person to something else is a good way to increase the effectiveness of an image. This comparison can be a forceful tool in writing. Similes always use the words *like* or *as*.

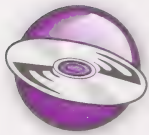
Look at the following similes that Steinbeck uses to create pictures in the reader's mind.

- On the sand banks the rabbits sat as quietly as little gray, sculptured stones.
- His huge companion . . . drank with long gulps, snorting into the water like a horse.
- A water snake slipped along on the pool, its head held up like a little periscope.



2. With a partner, or in a small group, look for other examples of similes in the first few pages of the novel.

Compare your examples with those on page 104 in the Appendix.



Parallelism and Repetition

Read the following lines that open Charles Dickens' novel *A Tale of Two Cities*. Then listen to them being read aloud on your *English Language Arts 20-2 Audio CD*.

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way

This writing technique, which combines sentences or parts of sentences that have the same length, structure, and weight in order to achieve a sense of balance, is called **parallelism**. While Dickens chose not to punctuate his parallel clauses, he could have. The use of parallelism for sentences or clauses within sentences can lend a great deal of punch to a speech or a piece of writing—if it is not overdone.

Repetition—another technique used to create emphasis—is often used with parallelism. Did you notice how Dickens repeated words such as *times* and *season*? By using repetition, Dickens emphasizes the sense of contrast.

Steinbeck uses parallelism and repetition effectively in the opening paragraph.

Rabbits come out of the brush to sit on the sand in the evening, and the damp flats are covered with the night tracks of 'coons, and with the spread pads of dogs from the ranches, and with the split wedge tracks of deer that come to drink in the dark.

The language in this sentence is quite simple, but it makes use of parallel structure and repetition with the phrases beginning “with the . . .” to produce effective imagery. Following are other examples of parallelism from the novel. The parallelism in each example has been underlined to help you see the structure.

- Both were dressed in denim trousers and in denim coats with brass buttons. Both wore black, shapeless hats and both carried tight blanket rolls over their shoulders.
- The sound of the approaching grain teams was louder, thud of big hooves on hard ground, drag of brakes, and the jingle of trace chains.
- Through the open door that led into the barn came the sound of moving horses, of feet stirring, of teeth champing on hay, of the rattle of halter chains.



Mrs. Jensen: Tell me what you think about this statement: “Steinbeck’s style is remarkable for its simplicity, directness, and he creates great imagery.”

Zoe: It lacks parallelism! It sets up a structure of single words being listed—simplicity and directness—and then it changes with the third part of the series.

Mrs. Jensen: Good. Now revise the sentence so it has parallelism.

Lee: How about this: “Steinbeck’s style is remarkable for its simplicity, directness, and great imagery.”

Mrs. Jensen: Excellent! I’m impressed.

For more information regarding parallelism, turn to page 87 in *Communicate!* and read the sections titled “Parallelism” and “Parallelism with Correlative Conjunctions.” Pay particular attention to the examples.

3. Rewrite the following sentences so that they contain parallelism.

- a. Mr. Chang was a university graduate, a Shakespearean scholar, and he wrote fiction.
- b. The students prepared for their exams at home, they spent extra hours with their tutors, they did the necessary research in the library, and not hesitating to ask questions in their classrooms.
- c. Either you begin studying now or don’t go out this evening.
- d. John’s reason for not doing his homework seems more reasonable than his sister.
- e. He hoped that he would get three things out of his high school education—to learn a second language, to make new friends, and earning a scholarship.

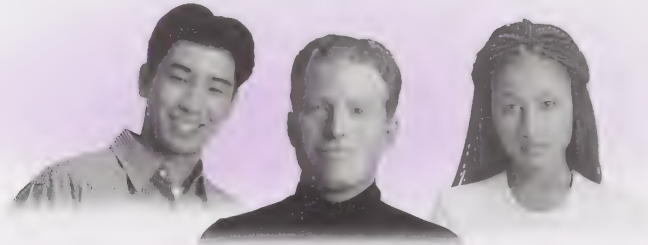
Compare your responses with those on page 104 in the Appendix.





If you need more help in understanding parallel structure, view the segment “Understanding Parallel Structure and Balance” on your *English Language Arts 20-2 Multimedia CD-ROM*.

Structure



Naseem: When I was reading *Of Mice and Men*, one thing that really stood out was the amount of dialogue that was used.

Mr. Murray: That’s right. Most of the story is revealed through the characters’ speeches. In what type of text do you usually find a lot of dialogue?

Lee: In plays.

Mr. Murray: Right! When Steinbeck wrote *Of Mice and Men*, he wanted to write a form of fiction that resembled a drama.

DID YOU KNOW?

Steinbeck adapted his novel *Of Mice and Men* for the stage in 1937 where it became a successful drama. Much of the dialogue from the novel was transferred almost word for word to the stage play.

- Steinbeck used a dramatic structure for his novel *Of Mice and Men*. Like a play, the novel has a great deal of dialogue. Suggest two other similarities between the structure of the novel *Of Mice and Men* and the structure of a play.

Compare your response with the one on page 105 in the Appendix.

Each chapter of the novel *Of Mice and Men*, like a scene from a play, opens with a description of the setting. As well, the action in each scene, which is presented mostly through dialogue, builds to a dramatic moment or a resolution. In a live play, this would be the moment when the curtain comes down.

To further demonstrate the dramatic structure of the novel, compare the novel with the following **synopsis** of the scenes found in the stage play.

synopsis: a short summary

Act 1	
Scene 1	a sandy bank of the Salinas River
Scene 2	the interior of the bunkhouse
Act 2	
Scene 1	the interior of the bunkhouse
Scene 2	the room of Crooks, the stable buck
Act 3	
Scene 1	one end of a large barn
Scene 2	the same as Act I, Scene 1



You may be interested to know that *Of Mice and Men* has not only been adapted as a stage play. It has also been adapted to film and to opera.

Three movie versions of the novel *Of Mice and Men* have been made over the years.

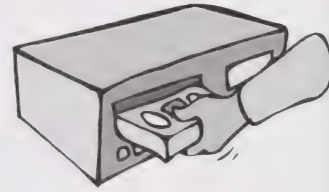
- *Of Mice and Men*, 1939, starring Burgess Meredith, Lon Chaney, Bob Steele, and Betty Field, and directed by Lewis Milestone
- *Of Mice and Men*, 1981, starring Robert Blake, Pat Hingle, Ted Neely, and Randy Quaid, and directed by Reza Badiyi—there is also a made-for-television movie of this version.
- *Of Mice and Men*, 1992, starring John Malkovich, Gary Sinise, Ray Walston, and Casey Siemaszko, and directed by Gary Sinise

If you have access to the Internet and wish to find out more about these films, use your favourite search engine to find information.



5. If you have the opportunity, rent one of the film versions of *Of Mice and Men*. View it to see how closely it parallels the novel. If a scene from the novel is altered or omitted, ask yourself why the change was made.

Afterward, do a review of the movie, either orally or in writing. Explain what you like best and least about the film. Would you say the film was faithful to the feelings and ideas of the novel? Overall, would you recommend this film? How many stars would you give it out of five?



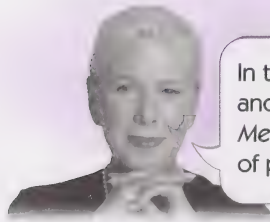
If you do not have the opportunity to view a film version of *Of Mice and Men*, read the suggested response anyway. It may give you some insight into how novels are adapted to film, and how different texts treat the same subject.

Compare your response with the one on page 105 in the Appendix.

Portfolio Item 3F

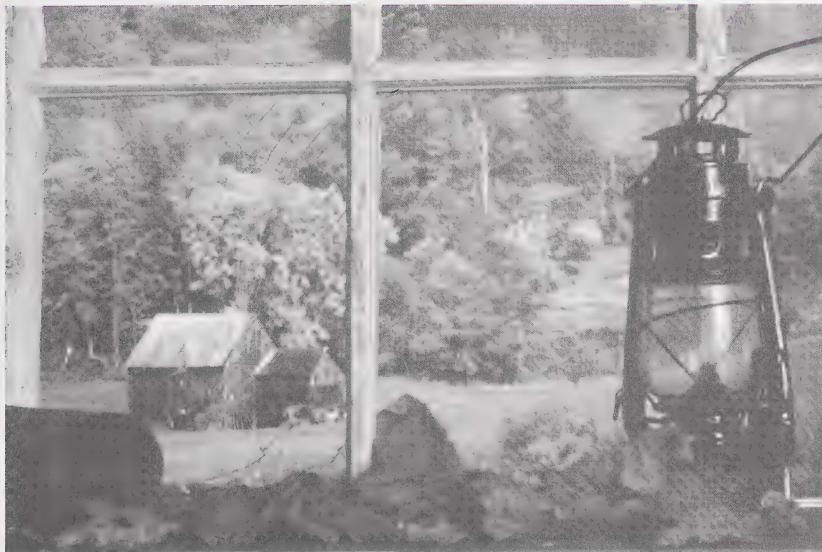
A Hollywood producer has asked you to make George and Lennie the main characters in a new TV series; however, she wants you to update the series to the present time. What kind of show would it be? What would the setting be? What would George and Lennie do? Prepare a memo to the producer outlining your ideas.

Go to page 5 of Assignment Booklet 3B and respond to questions 4 and 5 of Section 3.



In this lesson, you examined the style and structure of the novel *Of Mice and Men*. In doing so, you investigated the use of parallelism and repetition in writing.

Conclusion



At first glance, the novel *Of Mice and Men* appears to be a simple story of two migrant workers trying to achieve their dream of owning a farm. Upon closer study, *Of Mice and Men* is much more complex. In this section, you focused on some of these complexities that give deeper meaning to the novel.

In Lesson 1, you considered symbols in general and then looked at specific literary symbols in the novel. You discovered that, through interpreting literary symbols, you can gain a better understanding of the message a writer wishes to convey. In Lesson 2, you reviewed the meaning of theme and learned some tips on how to find the theme in a story. You then explored some of the themes in the novel *Of Mice and Men*. You ended the section with an examination of the style and structure that Steinbeck used in writing *Of Mice and Men*.

By now you should be able to identify and explain major symbols in the works that you read. You should also be able to identify the theme of the works, and be aware of some of the devices used by writers to convey their messages to readers.

Remember that your vocabulary log and three portfolio items must be submitted with Assignment Booklet 3B. You may wish to review the directions that were given in Section 1 of Module 1 for submitting your portfolio.

Module Summary

In Module 3, you accomplished the following. You

- reviewed the story elements
- learned some strategies for reading fiction
- considered the use of literary devices
- researched the poem “In Flanders Fields”
- discovered flash fiction
- responded critically and personally to fiction
- read the novel *Of Mice and Men*
- practised using context clues
- wrote dialogue using colloquialisms and slang
- demonstrated your understanding of the characters and their actions
- kept a vocabulary log
- connected fictional characters and happenings to your own experiences
- demonstrated your understanding of Steinbeck’s purpose in writing his novel
- analyzed symbols and themes in the novel
- examined the style that Steinbeck used in *Of Mice and Men*
- practised writing parallelisms
- developed insights into the novel form, yourself, and the world



Go to page 7 of Assignment Booklet 3B and complete the Final Module Assignment.

Appendix

Glossary
Suggested Responses
Readings
Image Credits



Glossary

alliteration: repetition of consonant sounds

allusion: a reference to a significant person, event, place, or literary work that the writer expects the reader to recognize

antagonist: major character or force that opposes the protagonist

antecedent action: in literature, the events that took place before the opening of the story

characters: fictional people

climax: highest point of emotional intensity, usually a turning point in the protagonist's fortunes

conflict: in fiction, the struggle between opposing characters or forces

context: the circumstances or conditions in which a text was created

critical response: a response to a text that focuses on its meaning and the way it has been created

fiction: any narrative that is made up or imagined

Although fiction tells about imaginary people and happenings, it may be based on actual events or people.

figurative language: language that uses figures of speech like similes and metaphors to achieve a special effect

first-person point of view: a story told through the eyes of one character

foreshadowing: a hint of events to come, which prepares the reader for the outcome of a story

genre: a category of text, especially of literature, for example, short story, poetry, novel, essay

idiom: a colloquial expression that cannot be directly translated into another language, usually because it has a meaning different from the literal meaning of the words, for example, "dip into a book" or "catch a cold"

initial incident: in literature, the problem or event that begins the conflict

limited omniscient: point of view similar to omniscient but the narrator is limited to one character's mind

literary symbol: in a work of literature, any character, object, action, or event that has a second meaning in addition to its literal meaning

Literary symbols are used to help the reader gain a better understanding of the message that the writer wishes to convey.

mood: feeling created in the reader by a piece of literature

omniscient: third-person point of view with an all-knowing narrator

parallelism: the writing technique of combining sentences or parts of sentences that have the same length, structure, and weight in order to achieve a sense of balance

personal response: a reaction to a text that expresses a personal opinion and considers the text in the light of personal experience

plot: the sequence of actions or events that occur in a story

point of view: perspective from which a story is told

prose: writing that uses ordinary language, not poetry

protagonist: the main character in a story

rising action: series of events in a story that build tension and lead to the climax

setting: the time and place of a story

simile: a comparison between two unlike things using the words *like* or *as*

subject: the main idea in a piece of writing

symbol: something that stands for or represents something else

theme: the central idea of a story, which is usually implied rather than directly stated

topic: a more limited subject

Suggested Responses

Section 1: Lesson 1

1. Responses here will be entirely personal. For example, you may like an adventure story with exciting twists and turns of the plot. Or, you may like a story with a specific problem in need of solving—a murder mystery, for example. Perhaps you like stories in which you can relate to a character's journey of self-discovery. Or, you may like a story that has a happy ending—where good and evil are easily recognized and rewarded or punished in a suitable manner.
2. There are readers who dislike action-packed adventures because they are often unrealistic and the characters tend to be one-dimensional. Other readers dislike romance stories, because they frequently offer an unrealistic view of relationships. Many readers, however, read to escape from their lives; therefore, they are not interested in ordinary characters with ordinary problems. They want fantastic stories about larger-than-life characters. What about you?
3. There are a number of strategies that you can use to get the most from reading a short story:
 - Make predictions based on the first 20 or 30 lines of the story.
 - Answer the 5Ws + H questions about the story you are reading.
 - Who is the main character?
 - What happens?
 - Where does the story take place?
 - When does the story take place?
 - Why does the conflict happen?
 - How is the conflict resolved?
 - Use context clues to discover the appropriate meaning of unfamiliar words or phrases.
 - Use a reading log to keep track of characters and events and to reflect on situations or characters. It is more likely that you would use this strategy when reading a more complex story such as a novel.

4. Because everyone brings their own prior knowledge and experience to the story, there are, of course, no right or wrong predictions. Compare your predictions to the following:
- The title suggests that the story may have something to do with membership in a club or similar organization where you have to pay a fee to join.
 - The “Before You Read” note leads me to believe that the story involves a crime. The sentence beside the story title reinforces this.
 - The notes on the author do not tell much about the story but from past reading experiences, I know that authors often write about places and times they are familiar with. So, maybe this story takes place in Nova Scotia in earlier times. Or, because the author fought in World War I, it might have something to do with that.
5. a. Responses will vary depending upon the predictions that you made.
- b. The setting of the story has been established and the main character introduced. Also, a conflict has been revealed.
6. Responses will vary. Following are two possibilities:
- I think the unexpected twist at the end of the story was just meant to entertain the reader. Without it, the story is simply a recounting of how one man murdered another because of jealousy.
 - I think the surprise ending emphasizes the main idea of the story—that good will eventually overcome evil. Dickie, who represents good, reaches out from the grave to name his killer, Simon, who is evil.
7. a. The ending of “Paid-up Member” is foreshadowed by Simon’s reference to the poem “In Flanders Fields” and by the envelope that Dickie took from his jacket to show Simon. As in “Paid-up Member,” foreshadowing often does not become evident until the end of a story. It is only then the reader realizes that all along the author has given hints regarding the outcome of the story.
- b. The use of foreshadowing makes the ending of “Paid-up Member” more believable because it establishes a reason for the poppies growing in Simon’s field. As well, it makes a connection between Dickie’s character as a returned soldier and Simon’s dislike of “soldier stuff” and his jealousy of Dickie. Without foreshadowing, the surprise ending would seem to arrive out of the blue. The foreshadowing adds plausibility to the story.

8. Question 3 from *Between the Lines* 11

Responses will be personal. Following are one student’s thoughts:

I think Mary and Dickie probably liked the imagery of the poppies growing between the crosses that mark the graves of the soldiers killed in battle and of the birds still singing and flying amid the death and destruction. They probably liked the idea of a tribute being given to the fallen soldiers. Simon considered the poem “rot” because he “hated soldier stuff.” I think Simon felt that the poem represented the qualities in Dickie that Simon was jealous of—qualities that Simon did not possess—qualities that had enabled Dickie to “steal” Mary from him.

Section 1: Lesson 2

1.
 - a. The time setting at the beginning of the story is noon, probably in the spring of the year—suggested by the mention of the disc harrow, an implement used to prepare the soil for planting. The use of horses and the reference to “the settlement” suggest the story takes place in the past.
 - b. The place setting is a farming community.
2. The following words are often associated with the moods of these particular types of stories. You may have suggested others.
 - a. adventure: exciting, suspenseful, thrilling
 - b. romance: happy, sad, emotional, sentimental
 - c. horror: suspenseful, gruesome, chilling
3.
 - a. At the beginning the mood is tense and grim. It seems threatening, like a storm about to erupt.
 - b. Phrases that help to create this mood include the following. You may have selected others.
 - . . . he had cleaned and oiled his old army rifle, and he meant to use it.
 - Simon gritted his teeth . . .
 - . . . had asked for trouble.
 - . . . he swung his whip sharply.
4. Examples of antecedent action in the story “Paid-up Member” include the following:
 - Simon and Wheeler could not agree on the price of the farm Simon wanted to buy.
 - Jim Dickie had come into the settlement and bought the farm Simon wanted to buy.
 - Dickie was a member of the Legion, which suggests he was a war veteran.
 - Simon and Mary had quarrelled.
 - Mary and Jim Dickie were going to be married.
 - Simon’s farm was paid for. His house was ready for a bride.
5.
 - a. Simon’s motivation for the murder of Jim Dickie was jealousy.
 - b. Simon’s ultimate goal is to marry Mary. His farm is paid for and his house is ready to receive a bride. All Simon needs to “complete the picture” is for Mary to be his wife.
6. Examples of rising action in the story “Paid-up Member” include the following:
 - Simon digs a shallow trench.
 - Dickie comes by on his way from the post office.
 - Simon shoots Dickie, buries him in the trench, and harrows the soil.
 - Hank Wheeler questions Dickie’s disappearance.
 - Time passes and the grain grows in the field where Dickie is buried.
 - Hank Wheeler and an officer from the city are waiting for Simon at his house.

7. The conflict in “Paid-up Member” is person against person. Simon, the main character, is prevented from reaching his goal (buying a farm from Hank Wheeler and marrying Mary) by Jim Dickie—although Dickie is probably not aware that he is preventing Simon from reaching his goal.
8. a. Simon is cold and insensitive. This is revealed by his thoughts about the poem, his planning of the murder, and his actions—the cold-blooded murder of his neighbour. One wonders how he can think of courting Mary after shooting her fiancé. He is also false. This is revealed by his actions when he pretends neighbourliness with Dickie although he hates him, and when he lies to Wheeler about not seeing Dickie.

Jim Dickie is friendly and open. This is revealed by his eagerness to share his mail with Simon. Jim Dickie seems to be well respected and liked. This is shown by the actions of the other characters. For example, Mary defends the poem, which Dickie admires; she is engaged to be married to Dickie; and Wheeler is concerned about Dickie’s disappearance.

- b. The differences in the two men’s characters is largely responsible for the conflict. If the differences did not exist, there probably would not be any conflict.

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|------------------------------------|
| 9. | Protagonist | Antagonist |
| a. | Lena and Sue | the flood |
| b. | Pankaj | himself (his own fears and doubts) |
| c. | Jacob | the other students |

10. The protagonist is Simon; the antagonist is Jim Dickie.

11. a. a garbage dump: *filth, stench, disorder*
 b. a wheatfield in the middle of a summer drought: sadness, despair, hopelessness, thirst
 c. the Northern Lights: awe, wonder, chill, fascination
 d. a sunset in Hawaii: blaze of colour, awe, tranquillity, perfection

12. a. limited omniscient
 b. first person
 c. omniscient

13. Remember that different readers may interpret the same story in different ways. Following are two students’ thoughts on the theme of “Paid-up Member”:

- The theme of the story “Paid-up Member” is that there is no such thing as a perfect crime because humans are fallible. The protagonist, Simon, realizes this when Wheeler explains why he is being charged with Dickie’s murder.
- I think the theme of the story “Paid-up Member” is that good will overcome evil. The goodness of Dickie (even though he is dead) reveals that Simon is the murderer.

You may have felt that “Paid-up Member” was written primarily for entertainment with the emphasis on a plot with a twist. As such it does not offer any profound thoughts about life and human nature. This is often the case with short stories and it is a legitimate argument.

Section 1: Lesson 3

1. a. and b. Your chart should look something like this.

	Explanation	Sentence Beginnings
Personal Response	• response based on personal opinion - and personal connection with the text • rooted in personal experience, beliefs, values, and knowledge	• I liked . . . • I disliked . . . • I enjoyed . . . • This text reminds me of . . . • The character in this text reminds me of . . . • As I read this text, I thought of . . . • Something similar happened to me . . . • My parents have often told me . . . • When I read this text, I felt . . . • I would love to . . .
Critical Response	• focuses on the text and its meaning • considers main ideas and details of text • looks at significant words and passages and what they mean • recognizes devices and techniques used to create the text	• The main idea in this text is that . . . • I'm not sure what the author means when he says that . . . • Why does . . . • After I read X, I expected . . . • The title made me realize that . . . • This part is (is not) believable because . . . • It is ironic that . . . • The ending showed . . . • The author is reminding us that . . . • After reading this text, I realize that . . . • The change in this character reveals . . .

2. The point of realization may vary. Following is one student's response:

I began to suspect this was no ordinary visit when the dentist says to his son "Tell him I'm not here," I knew for sure when the son states, "He says if you don't take out his tooth, he'll shoot you."

3. Question 1 from Between the Lines 11:

The dentist refuses to help the mayor at first because they are on opposing sides in a political conflict. The dentist does not really have any choice about treating the mayor because the mayor is the ruling power—he is the government.

The reason the dentist gives for not using anaesthesia is the tooth is abscessed. He may be telling the truth but whether he is or not, he has no sympathy for the mayor. His statement, "Now you'll pay for our twenty dead men," supports this.

4. It is likely that the mayor had no choice—there is probably only one dentist—if he wanted to relieve his pain. We are told the right side of his face is swollen and painful, and he has a five-day-old beard. Obviously, he can no longer endure the pain so he places himself at the mercy of his foe.
5. The pain is gone. The mayor is once again in control. He reasserts his power by saying he and the town are one and the same.
6. a. The following are some ways in which the stories are alike:
- The protagonists in both stories oppose the ruling power.
 - The antagonists in both stories place themselves at the mercy of the protagonists.
 - Both protagonists act professionally and take pride in the work they do.
 - The conflict in both stories involves a power struggle.
 - The setting in both appears to be in South America.
- b. The following are some ways in which the stories differ:
- The stories are told from different points of view.
 - "Just Lather, Nothing Else" has an ironic ending.
 - The tone is very different in the two stories. The writer of "One of These Days" uses a matter-of-fact tone. Neither of the main characters reveals very much emotion. In contrast, the writer of "Just Lather, Nothing Else" involves the reader in what the main character is feeling. The tone is more personal.
7. Your response will be personal. Did you support your answer with details from the story?
8. Again, response will be personal opinion. Some people find that hearing a story read helps them to visualize more clearly what is happening in the story. Others prefer to see the words.

Section 1: Lesson 4

1. Was your prediction based on personal experience? on the connotation of the words in the title? on the theme of the unit in *Between the Lines 11*? on something entirely different?

2. Question 1 from *Between the Lines 11*

You probably did not figure out what was going on until you read the words “Doug placed a rose on Joey’s tombstone.” The reader is misled by the beginning of the story because it appears that Doug is talking face-to-face with Joey.

3. Following are one student’s thoughts. Do you agree with them?

- a. I think the author’s purpose in writing this short short story was to call attention to the consequences of drinking and driving.
- b. The short short story format was an excellent choice for presenting this message. It catches your attention and leaves you thinking. It presents an emotional message and it has a strong impact on the reader. It’s kind of like a poem in that respect. I don’t think a longer story would have the same effect.

4. The picture illustrates the story but it does not give away the surprise ending. It is not until you learn where the story takes place and what happened that you realize the rose is on a tombstone. The single rose and the blue tone of the picture help to set the mood for the story.

5.

Short Story Elements	"It Was a Year Ago"
setting and mood	a cemetery at Christmas; solemn and quiet, almost peaceful
plot	contains the plot elements
• antecedent action	Doug was drinking and driving, which led to a car accident and Joey’s death.
• initial incident	Doug drives when he is drunk.
• rising action (tension)	Joey doesn’t respond to Doug’s greeting; silence surrounds them; Doug apologizes.
• climax	Doug places a rose on Joey’s tombstone.
• falling action	Doug reveals he was driving while drunk.
conflict	person against self
• protagonist	Doug
• antagonist	his conscience
characters	Doug and Joey
point of view	omniscient
theme	Drinking and driving can have tragic consequences.

“It Was a Year Ago” has all the elements of a short story. The biggest difference is that it is over before most of the elements are revealed. For example, the setting, the conflict, the initial incident, and the antecedent action are not revealed until the climax and falling action occur. Also, there is very little description in “It Was a Year Ago.” It is quite stark, which lends itself to the mood and the message.

Section 2: Lesson 1

1. Your chart of differences between the short story and the novel may look like the following one.

Short Story	Novel
• usually has only a few characters • characters are not usually fully developed (that is, we learn only two or three things about them) • usually has only one setting (time and place) • has one main conflict or problem that the main character must deal with	• often has many characters • main characters usually fully developed • has many settings; can take place over a long period of time and in many locations • could contain many conflicts or problems that need to be resolved

Keep in mind that these differences may not apply to every short story or novel. There are always exceptions. It is possible to have a short story with several characters, or a novel with very few.

2. Strategies used will vary. Following are three students’ responses:

- When I read a novel, I make a list of the characters as they are introduced. I find this helps me to keep from getting them mixed up, especially if it’s a novel with a lot of characters.
- If it’s a novel that takes me quite a while to read, I keep a reading log. It helps me keep track of characters and important events. I feel like I become more involved in the action when I keep a reading log. I guess it makes me think about the characters and what’s happening. It helps me make connections between what is happening in the novel and what is happening in my own life.
- I use the 5Ws + H questions whenever I read a novel. I ask myself these questions:
 - Who are the main characters? the protagonist? the antagonist?
 - What happens within the plot?
 - Where does the story take place?
 - When does the story take place?
 - Why does the conflict happen?
 - How do the characters resolve their problems?

Section 2: Lesson 2

1. Your answer here will be entirely personal. For example, you might say that you have a responsibility to pay attention in class, take good notes, do your homework, and try to earn the best marks that you can. You might say that you sacrifice going out with friends in the evenings so that you can keep up with your homework.
2.
 - a. Sycamores are a type of tree. This is suggested first by the way the writer groups them with willows, and later by the description of the limb of the giant sycamore. Of course, this means you need to know that willows are trees and a limb is a part of a tree in order to make this deduction.
 - b. The phrase *attacking anyone the first chance he gets* tells you that *pugnacious* means *looking for a fight*.
 - c. Words like *but*, *although*, *not*, and *despite* signal a contrast. They indicate that one part of the sentence is opposite in meaning to another part. In this case, *although* indicates that turbulent is the opposite of calm. In other words turbulent means wild.
 - d. Comparisons provide context clues. Comparison clues are often introduced by the word *like* or *as*. What word would you use to describe the cry of an angry crow? If you try substituting your own word, you can figure out the meaning of the unfamiliar word.

The buzz of the doorbell was as _____ as the cry of an angry crow.

Did you substitute something like *harsh* for strident? Congratulations! You have just used context to figure out the meaning of *strident*.

- e. Sometimes context clues can be direct clues. *Word hoarder* is defined directly by the phrase *someone who accumulates words*.

Writers sometimes make a description stronger by using two closely related words. If you did not understand *gusto*, you could infer that it is close in meaning to *enthusiasm*. Use caution, however, in using related words as context clues. Watch for situations in which the words are not really related. For example, in the sentence *The child was hostile and unhappy*, the terms *hostile* and *unhappy* are not very closely related.

Section 2: Lesson 3

1. Expectations you have of your friends that you would also like them to have of you might include
 - being ready to help you with something
 - being prepared to listen to problems sympathetically
 - liking you and accepting you for who you are
 - taking your side in a conflict

Can you think of any other ideas?

2. You might have seen friends who seem to take each other for granted, perhaps because they feel they do not have to prove their friendship to each other. Some people can be very possessive of their friends—they seem jealous of anyone else who tries to join the friendship and they will be very unfriendly to the new person. Other friends seem to behave as a mini-support group; they share their problems, show their concern, and support each other through any difficulties. Other friends bring their frustrations and confusion about life into their friendship—one minute they are inseparable and the next minute they are not talking to each other.

What other ways can you think of?

3. George has to look out for Lennie, and make sure he has both food and shelter. He feels he must protect Lennie from harm, because Lennie does not have the knowledge and skills to look out for himself. George is not free to go out and do what he wants.
4. Lennie realizes and takes pride in the fact that he is a strong and hard-working person, but he never means to hurt anyone or anything. He is not aware that he often uses too much force, even when showing tenderness and affection. He is not aware that he kills the mice and other animals that he caresses.
5. Answers will vary here, but your character chart should look more or less like the following:

Major Characters	Positive Qualities	Negative Qualities
George	• responsible • protective • caring	• impatient at times • swears a lot
Lennie	• hard worker • loyal	• unaware of his own strength • too childlike to cope
Slim	• good leader • wise • understanding • confident	• not a talker; reveals very little about himself
Candy	• sensitive • friendly	• allows himself to be bullied by others
Curley	• Curley does not seem to have any positive qualities.	• mean • insecure • possessive
Minor Characters	Positive Qualities	Negative Qualities
Curley's wife	• nice to Lennie	• attention seeking • flirts • picks on Crooks
Carlson	• practical • straightforward • says what he thinks	• insensitive • too blunt
the Boss	• gives Lennie and George a chance	• suspicious

6. Following are some of the points you may have included in your response:

Slim is a hard worker and a dependable, thoughtful person. He does not say much, but when he does speak he has something worth saying. He seems very calm and self-assured. Most people would probably enjoy working for Slim because he would be honest with employees. He would have good advice about the job, and he would not expect anyone to do something he would not do himself. He would treat workers fairly and with respect.

The Boss, on the other hand, does not seem to care much about his employees. He is suspicious of George and Lennie, which suggests he may not trust any of his employees much. People would probably not want to work for him, because they would not feel their work is valued or respected. Candy says the Boss has a bad temper, but he can be nice at times; but no one wants to work for someone who displays erratic moods. It can lead to very unfair treatment of employees.

7. Slim believes George had no other choice but to do what he did. He realizes that George's action was not taken out of anger; rather it showed just how strong the bonds were between George and Lennie. Slim is ready to stand by George when he really needs a friend.
8. The men work on a farm, which is a long ride from town. They have only each other for company. Their job requires them to work hard all day, with little time for conversation. In the evenings, the men tend to play cards or horseshoes instead of making meaningful conversation. There are no wives or children to share their lives with—nothing to ease their loneliness.
9. a. Crooks' room is all he has. He shows his pride by making his room look as homey and permanent as possible with the few possessions he has.
- b. He has many books and he reads a great deal. The characters in the books are his only friends.
10. Candy is old and no longer physically strong. As well, he has only one hand. Because he cannot keep up with the other men, they tend to look down on him; he is not treated with the same respect as the other men.

Curley's wife is the only woman in the story. The men do not want anything to do with her, partly because they feel she does not belong on the ranch, which they feel is male territory, and partly because she is the wife of the boss's son, who is very possessive. To be seen talking to her is to invite trouble.

Section 2: Lesson 4

1. Lennie's face is described as "shapeless." When he drinks, he is described as "snorting into the water like a horse." Lennie does not listen when George asks him to stop drinking. He speaks in very simple sentences full of childlike phrases. He plays in the water; he likes to imitate George's actions. He does not remember things and when he speaks, he repeats certain words and phrases. He plays with the mice, and when George scolds him he cries. George speaks to Lennie as someone would speak to a child although Lennie is a man. Taken together, these examples suggest a person of limited intelligence and understanding.

2. Three such similes are

- Blubberin' like a baby!
- . . . snorting into the water like a horse.
- Slowly, like a terrier . . .

3. Candy has a low opinion of her. He thinks she is nothing but trouble.

4. She flirts with the men and often appears where she is not wanted. She resents Curley because he wants to fight all of the time and does not pay any attention to her. She talks wistfully about being in the pictures, as if she yearns to escape into a movie world.

5. Curley expresses his insecurity in destructive acts, such as starting fights with the men. He tries to cover his insecurity by acting like a "big-shot," showing off his power over the men and over his wife. Such acts make him unpopular with the other characters. Because he has no friends, he trusts no one. He is one of the loneliest of the characters in *Of Mice and Men*.

6. Candy describes Curley in this way: "Curley's like a lot of little guys. He hates big guys. He's all the time picking scraps with big guys. Kind of like he's mad at 'em because he ain't a big guy."

7. Your rewritten sentences should be similar to the following:

a. "I won't get into trouble, George. I am not going to say a word."

b. "Maybe tomorrow. Let us wait until tomorrow."

c. "My, she was pretty."

d. "I have a terrible stomach ache. It's a result of eating those turnips. I knew that they would give me indigestion."

e. "Well, I wasn't hurting them. I was just holding mine on my lap and petting it."

f. "Do you want me to tell you what will happen? They will take you to the mental hospital where you will be tied up with a collar, like a dog."

8. When the dialogue is re-written in standard English, it sounds stilted and artificial. It does not fit the image of the characters as uneducated and unsophisticated labourers. The re-written speeches do not make the characters plausible. For example, it is unlikely that a simple-minded person such as Lennie would speak careful English.

9. **Question b) from *Communicate!*:**

"I'll come later," he replied.

"But your grandmother wants to see you," his mother explained.

"It's not that far. I'll walk."

10. Responses will, of course, vary. Following are possibilities. The changes have been boldfaced.

- a. "You just started that book," **I exclaimed in astonishment**, "and you're already reading the last page!"
"That's how I always read mystery stories," **she stated matter-of-factly**.
- b. **He questioned suspiciously**, "What's going on here?"
"Nothing," **replied the boy belligerently**.
- c. "Come down from that tower!" **shouted the man with an air of authority**.
"I can't move," **shrilled Robin, her voice quivering with fear**.

Section 2: Lesson 5

- 1.
 - a. George dreams of taking his pay and spending it in town on liquor and prostitutes.
 - b. George dreams of a small farm where he and Lennie will have cows and chickens. There will also be rabbits for Lennie to tend. He dreams of a place of his own where he can be boss and where Lennie will be safe.
- 2. George has no definite plans about the farm. He does not appear to know much about farming; in fact, his stories about the farm make farming life seem very easy.
- 3. Lennie dreams of tending rabbits on the farm that George dreams of owning. Lennie wants to feel important by being responsible for something.
- 4. Candy is afraid of being left alone in his old age. If he helped George and Lennie buy the farm, he could have people to talk to and to look after him. He would also feel that he is building something. He would feel useful again.
- 5. History is full of such examples. For example, Christopher Columbus had a dream of sailing west across the Atlantic. His enthusiasm inspired others to offer financial support to launch his dream. Closer to home, artist Peter Lewis had the "crazy" idea of turning the High Level Bridge in Edmonton into a waterfall. While many people laughed at the idea, many others were inspired by Lewis to donate building materials and to volunteer their labour in order to make the idea a reality.
- 6. Curley's wife reminds Crooks that he is "just" a black man with a crooked back. She tells him she could end his dream in a hurry by saying he attacked her. His dream of taking part in the farm idea is shattered when George shows his anger at Lennie and Candy for having told Crooks about the farm they planned to buy. Crooks realizes that there is no place for him in their dream.
- 7. She dreamed of going to Hollywood and being in movies. She believed she could have been a big star, too, if only her mother had not held her back.
- 8. Lennie accidentally kills Curley's wife and shatters the dream.

9. You might say something like this:

George knows that Lennie has gone too far; he can no longer save Lennie or be responsible for him. But without Lennie the dream is impossible, because it always included Lennie. George is without hope and will probably spend his future as he once feared he would, wasting his money on things of no value.

10. Most of the examples involve Lennie's behaviour.

- George informs Slim of the incident in Weed.
- There are references to the fact that Lennie is too strong for his own good.
- George warns Lennie not to hurt the puppy. Later Lennie accidentally kills the puppy.
- Carlson shows Candy how to shoot the dog in the back of the head. George will later shoot Lennie in the back of the head.

In spite of George's positive outlook, these examples suggest to the reader that something bad is going to happen to George's dream.

Section 2: Lesson 6

1. Lennie seems incapable of understanding the consequences of his actions. When he gets excited, he cannot control his own strength.
2. Candy's dog is old and blind and in constant pain. It would be selfish of Candy to allow the dog to go on living in such a state just because it makes him feel less lonely.
3. Candy believes he should have taken responsibility for his dog and shot the dog himself.
4. Lennie is not capable of understanding what he has done. He seems to have no conception of death. The puppy is like a broken toy to him. He gets angry when it does not "work" anymore and hurls the puppy away.
5. Lennie fears George's anger. He fears that George will say that he cannot tend the rabbits.
6. Curley has a gun and a bad temper, and it is highly likely that he would have killed Lennie himself if he had found him. Otherwise, Lennie would have been arrested and put in jail. George cannot stand the thought of Lennie being in jail, because Lennie would not understand why he was there; he would be like a caged animal. An asylum for the mentally disabled would just as bad.
7. Responses will vary, but here is one possibility:

George accepts his responsibility for Lennie. He cannot allow Lennie to be killed like an animal by Curley; Lennie deserves more dignity than that. He also cannot envision Lennie being chained up in an institution. For George, Lennie's life makes sense only if he is free. Because he can no longer be free in life, George decides to set Lennie free in death.

Section 3: Lesson 1

1.
 - a. At the beginning of the novel, the scene is very peaceful and calm. At the end, everything is noisy and rushed. There is a feeling of impending disaster.
 - b. The setting may look the same in both cases, but it can be a place of happiness and sadness.
2. Your interpretation of the symbols may vary somewhat from the examples provided here. When interpreting symbols in literature, it is important to realize that readers sometimes disagree about the meaning of a particular symbol. They may even disagree about which things in a particular piece of literature are symbols. If you are not sure if your interpretation of the symbols in a work of literature is valid, discuss your ideas with another reader. Remember, too, that you must be able to back up your ideas with references to the text.
 - a. The heron and the water snake both appear twice in the novel *Of Mice and Men*—once in the first chapter and then again in the last chapter. Many readers of the novel have identified the heron as a symbol of death. In the last chapter, the little water snake's life comes to abrupt end; death (in the form of the heron) has found the water snake. In the last chapter, Lennie's time is also up. Death will find him too. It can also be said that the death of the little water snake foreshadows Lennie's death. In other words, the death of the water snake is symbolic of Lennie's death. Both die quickly and without fear. They do not suspect that they will die.

The other water snake that appears after the death of the first one may symbolize that no matter what happens, life goes on. It may also suggest that the death of the snake is unimportant—there are still other water snakes left in the world. After Lennie dies, life will go on for George.

- b. The relationship between Candy and his old dog is symbolic of the relationship between George and Lennie. While all of the other characters in the novel are loners, there is a bond between Candy and his dog and between George and Lennie. In some ways, Lennie is an inconvenience or burden to George in the same way that the dog is to Candy. But Candy and George accept the responsibility of caring for their companions; they have been with their companions for so long that they are used to their company.

George often says he would be better off without Lennie. Carlson tells Candy that he should shoot his old dog: "He ain't no good to you, Candy. An' he ain't no good to himself." When the old dog is killed, it foreshadows Lennie's death. Even the way in which they die is similar—both did not suspect that they would die, and both are shot in the back of the head.

3.
 - a. George also believes that he will find a perfect place for himself.
 - b. Curley is a very tense person, like a snake or a coil ready to spring. Also, Curley is never really straight with anyone.
 - c. Crooks has a crooked back, but he is also a twisted, bitter, and lonely man because of the prejudice he has experienced in life.
 - d. Slim's name is not symbolic. It is common for people to have nicknames that describe physical or personality traits. Slim is a slender man, and he has a nickname that suits his physical appearance.

- e. There are many possible reasons why the author chose not to give Curley's wife a name. It seems to indicate that she is not an important character. In reality, her presence in the novel is extremely important. It is because of her that George and Lennie's dream of owning the farm is destroyed, and it is because of her that Lennie dies at the end of the novel. By not naming her, and by showing her in an unsympathetic way, the reader is less concerned about her death than with Lennie's dilemma following her death. It has also been suggested that because she is only ever known as "Curley's wife," she is viewed as a possession of Curley's rather than as a human being with her own identity.

Section 3: Lesson 2

1. Responses will vary. Here is one possible theme statement: Sometimes dreams are not achieved; they end in disappointment instead.
2. Following are possible theme statements. Do you think the novel supports these statements?
 - When people are discriminated against because of old age, size, race, gender, or mental ability, they are often susceptible to loneliness.
 - People without a place where they feel at home tend to lead lonely lives.

Section 3: Lesson 3

1. Examples of alliteration will, of course, vary. Look at the following:
 - . . . and the **w**ind **w**aves flowed up the green pool.
 - "I gotta **p**air of **p**unks on my team that don't know a **b**arley **b**ag from a **b**lue **b**all. You guys ever **b**ucked any **b**arley?"

Are the sounds in the examples pleasant or harsh?

2. Examples of similes will also vary. Following are possibilities:
 - "You're crazy as a wedge." (Crooks talking to Lennie)
 - . . . and in and out of the beam, flies shot like rushing stars.
3.
 - a. Mr. Chang was a university graduate, a Shakespeare scholar, and a fiction writer.
 - b. The following two options contain parallelism:
 - The students prepared for their exams at home, they spent extra hours with their tutors, they did the necessary research in the library, and they asked questions in their classrooms.
 - The students prepared for their exams at home, spent extra hours with their tutors, did the necessary research in the library, and asked questions in their classrooms.

- c. Either you begin studying now or you will not be going out this evening.
- d. John's reason for not doing his homework seems more reasonable than his sister's.
- e. The following two options contain parallelism:
- He hoped that he would get three things out of his high school education—to learn a second language, to make new friends, and to earn a scholarship.
 - He hoped that he would get three things out of his high school education—learn a second language, make new friends, and earn a scholarship.
4. *Of Mice and Men* is similar to a play in structure in that there is not a great deal of description and the action takes place in only a few locations.

Description in a play is usually found in the stage directions. Each chapter in *Of Mice and Men* opens with detailed description, much like the stage directions at the beginning of a scene in a play. The action in most novels occurs in a number of locations. In *Of Mice and Men*, as in most plays, the action in each scene—or chapter—takes place in one small area

5. The following composition is made up of the best paragraphs taken from responses written by several Grade 11 students who read *Of Mice and Men* and then watched two film versions of the novel. You probably watched only one film version of the novel, but you may still be interested in the ideas and details that relate to a different film version of the novel.

I rented the 1981 film version of *Of Mice and Men* starring Robert Blake and Randy Quaid and the 1992 version starring John Malkovich and Gary Sinise. I thought both versions were excellent, and I would recommend them to anyone who wants to see a movie version of Steinbeck's novel.

Neither of the versions follows the novel 100 percent, but I thought that the 1981 version followed the novel more closely than the 1992 version. I noticed that some of the scenes from the novel that take place in the bunkhouse take place outdoors in the film versions. The sequence of some of the events has also been changed in the film versions and so has much of the dialogue, except in the key scenes where the wording is generally very similar to the original wording used in the novel.

I found it interesting that all of the swearwords used by the characters in the novel have been eliminated in the 1981 version. I guess that was done so that the film would not offend viewers who are sensitive to hearing coarse language. The 1992 version kept most of the cussing and cursing that you find in the novel. I personally do not have a problem with that kind of language because it adds to the realism of the characters and the story—it is the kind of language you would expect poorly educated labourers to speak among themselves at that time.

In the novel, Curley's wife's name is never mentioned; but, in the 1981 film, Curley's wife has a name—Mae. Mae is shown in a sympathetic way—a lonely young woman who loves puppy dogs and just wants contact with other people. Her death is far more tragic in this version of the story than in either the novel or the 1992 film, where she seems to enjoy putting people down and causing trouble.

In both film versions the opening and closing scenes are different from the book. In the first scene of the novel, George and Lennie come to the edge of the green pool of water. In each of the film versions, there is a scene that comes before the scene by the edge of the pool of water.

In the opening scene of the 1981 movie, George and Lennie are chased by men on horseback, end up at Lennie's Aunt Clara's house, are found by the men on horseback, and hide in an irrigation ditch. In the opening scene of the 1992 movie, George rides alone in a boxcar, remembering the last days of Lennie's life. The whole story is told as a flashback. The story begins by showing the young woman in Weed that Lennie frightened by touching her dress. She is running for help while George and Lennie run away and hide in an irrigation ditch.

These changes in the way that the filmmakers begin the story seem to emphasize the idea that Lennie and George constantly have to run away from the trouble that Lennie causes. It makes the viewer wonder what kind of trouble Lennie will get into next, and whether he and George will once again be able to escape the consequences.

The novel ends with Slim leading George away from Lennie's body while Curley and Carlson watch. In the two film versions, we never see any of the other characters again once George has found Lennie at the hiding place by the green pool. The 1981 version ends with George walking down the road alone. In the 1992 version, the story ends when the flashback ends—we again see George alone in the boxcar.

Although I really enjoyed both film versions of the story, I still liked reading the novel better. There is just so much that you experience when you read the novel that just cannot be recreated on the screen.

In Flanders Fields

John McCrae

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row
That mark our places; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

An Extract from “To a Mouse”

Robert Burns

Eighteenth Century English

But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane,
In proving foresight may be vain;
The best-laid schemes o’ mice an’ men
Gang aft agely,
An’ lea’e us nought but grief an’ pain,
For promis’d joy!

Still thou art blest, compar’d wi’ me
The present only toucheth thee:
But, Och! I backward cast my e’e
On prospects drear!
An’ forward, tho’ I canna see,
I guess an’ fear!

Twentieth Century English

But, mouse, you are not alone,
In proving foresight may be vain,
The best laid schemes of mice and men,
Go oft astray,
And leave us nothing but grief and pain,
To spoil our day.

Still you are blessed, compared with me!
The present only touches you,
But, oh, I backward cast my eye
On prospects dreary,
And forward, though I cannot see,
I guess and fear.

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